



*A Girl's  
Confessional*

*Caroline Parsons*





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A  
GIRL'S CONFSSIONAL,  
AND  
OTHER STORIES.

BY  
CAROLINE PARSONS.



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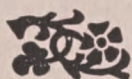
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## A GIRL'S CONFESSIONAL.



HE winter had been comfortably and exasperatingly warm. Comfortable to the poorly housed, underfed and thinly clad. Exasperating to the prosperous whose heavy top coats and jackets, fur lined and fur trimmed, elegant in material and fashioning, had lain hidden in moth chests or brought upon the desperate wearers the discomforts of a July sun.

On the night of Dec. 30 the mercury fell forty degrees. Poor men shivered in their rags, cursed and stole. Rich men revelled in their furs, rejoiced and caroused. Which was more displeasing to the controller of the temperature it is not easy to say.

The inmates of No. 459 Blank avenue, Chicago, enjoyed this fall in temperature



decorously and devoutly. They prayed for the poor and suffering, they made the house warm and cheerful and, arrayed in their most fetching winter costumes, went forth to delight the eyes and make envious the hearts of beholders.

Four hundred and fifty-nine is a handsome mansion, the only isolated house on the avenue. It stands in the center of a large lot, giving it an exclusive air and allowing the sun to shine in on every side; both advantages are duly appreciated by its owner, Mr. Paul Verger. He and his daughter Pauline are, barring servants, usually its only occupants. Now, however, there is a house party there, four young ladies, former school-mates of Pauline's. The girls are all past twenty-five; they are graduates of Miss X's school of New York, a school celebrated principally by the fact that it costs two thousand dollars a year to go there.

The girls had come out six years prior to this date and had been pre-eminently successful debutantes, no day of their first season being without at least four engagements. Now although just as handsome, just as well



dressed and much more agreeable, they were no longer popular—"to old for the young set and too young for the old." They were, of course, included in all the five-hundred functions—those pay-up afternoon receptions, the stuffy, screeching abominations that everybody despises and everybody patronizes; club hops, where one tete-a-tetes with his own set and snubs his grocer's wife, debutante receptions, weddings and church socials. They were devoted neither to china painting nor mothers' meetings. Not one belonged to a woman's club and, although competent, it was not their habit to discuss the social problem and Robert Browning's poetry. They gave to charity, often foolishly and always generously. They kept posted on current topics of interest in politics, religion and literature. They were merely ordinary, every-day girls, with plenty of money and some common sense.

Pauline Verger was a tall handsome aristocratic girl, particularly proud of the coat-of-arms stamped upon their silver and stationery, a legitimate inheritance from ancestors, who, she believed, had always



been at the very top of every social pyramid wherever their lot was cast.

Mary Snyder came from Boston. A plain scholarly girl, also aristocratic and proud of an educated ancestry.

Julia Cramer's home was in Denver. She belonged to the "newly rich ;" at least her grandfather did. Her especial haughtiness and air of consequence came from the fact that she possessed in her own right a good half million.

Dora Green lived in the South, not far from Charleston. Her father had plenty of money, through the foresight of her grandfather, who sold his plantation and negroes early in the sixties, then went to Europe and stayed till the "late unpleasantness" was over. The family had come home after the war, bought the old plantation back again, hired the negroes, and was living sumptuously in as nearly the old way as possible. Dora was proud of her Southern birth and the comforting fact that not one of her ancestors had ever done anything that could be called work.

Grace Linton came from Cincinnati. She was not proud, not scholarly nor lazy. She



was small, pretty and graceful, reckless, daring and honest. Her father was rich, and that pleased her because it made it possible for her to do very much as she pleased.

The girls had just come in from their walk full of health and happiness, which they attributed to the perfect winter day, not realizing the debt this fine condition of mind and body owed to comfortable, becoming and elegant apparel. Seated in Mr. Verger's elegant library, Mary Snyder read aloud from Richard Harding Davis's stories. She had finished "That other woman" and the girls had reached that point in their heated discussion as to the correctness of the heroine's behavior, where men came to blows, fistcuffs, and women came to blows, not fistcuffs, but quite as painful.

"One would easily suppose," said Pauline, who had hotly defended the girl, "that you had some good reason for taking that fellow's part."

"But you know I haven't," Mary answered, "you know I would have every man as pure and honest as he requires his wife to be, but I do think everybody should be fairly



judged, and I consider that fair judgment would look upon our sins and the sins of our brothers from an entirely different standpoint. We are guarded from infancy till we are safely landed in our husband's arms or buried, while our brothers are sent away from home, sometimes as mere lads and left wholly dependent upon their own consciences, subject to the vilest and most alluring temptations. I am coming to believe that every one of the "Thou shalt nots" of the ten commandments are equally binding; that we are not privileged to enforce three or four merely and disregard the remaining seven or eight — to dishonor one's parents — to lie about one's neighbors — to covet, is as surely a violation of the law as to steal, kill, and so forth."

"Only very wicked people break the commandments," said Dora, "I never even take the trouble to say, 'incline our hearts to keep this law.'" The girls smiled. Dora's respect for her parents and for the truth in society gossip was not perfect.

"Mary," said Pauline, "suppose you judge from these different standpoints, you will find girls are not so easily tempted,



and they are naturally better than boys."

"No, they are not," Mary answered. "Temptations and favorable opportunities are not constantly inviting them. When they do, they yield quite as often as the boys and judging from the conditions are just as guilty in the sight of God and the angels, I mean. We judge sin by the consequences; they by the motives."

"Oh! how tiresome you all are!" Dora exclaimed. "No nice girl is ever wicked and nice men always are."

"We are," said Mary, "fair samples of closely guarded girls, with as few temptations to wrong-doing as any. Suppose each one of us conscientiously tells the one act of her life of which she is most ashamed. My story will likely be the most humiliating, but I will tell if you all will."

And it was agreed that at midnight on Dec. 31 they would make Pauline's sitting room their confessional.

This room was unusual and beautiful, Its ceiling was frescoed in dark reds and blues and gold. Its walls were covered with pieces of choice tapestry of Pauline's select



ing. On the floor lay rich Oriental rugs, and the couches, hammocks, chairs and cushions were of the same harmonious colors.

There were palms and rubber trees, roses and lilies, and tonight a table laid with daintiest linen and china, shining glass and silver, with chafing dish, coffee-urn and all the necessities of a delicious feast. There was a cheerful fire in the grate and the soft light from many electric lamps shone through glass and under shades of the same rich Oriental coloring. In the center of the room, Pauline had placed a comfortable chair, footstool and cushions "for the penitent," she said.

At twelve o'clock the girls came in one by one, gowned in loose house robes of bright-colored, silky, clinging stuffs. There was an effort to keep up their customary chatter, but only Dora seemed to consider it a lark. She arranged her blue gown and her yellow curly head prettily and comfortably on the dark, soft cushions in a red silk hammock.

"Isn't it jolly fun, Julia?" she said, and Julia, with a scared, anxious face, remarked:



"Yes! Awfully jolly!"

"Oh you look jolly, Julia," said Grace, "you remind one of the woman who enjoyed funerals. For my part, I feel as if I were about to be buried alive."

"Rather," remarked Pauline, "to be resurrected, with the books of the recording angel wide open."

"Let's begin with the oldest," said Grace, "Which is it, Mary or Pauline? I forget."

"It is Mary," Pauline said, "She is a week older than I."

"Very well," said Mary, "the sooner begun the sooner ended. I cannot despise myself more than I do, and if you despise me it will only be what I deserve."

"Don't do it," said Grace.

"I want to," Mary answered. She sat in the penitential chair. Her dress was of some rich dark red material with collar and belt that flashed and sparkled as if made of veritable precious stones. Her long black hair fell way below her waist, she looked like an Indian princess.

"My! Isn't she stunning!" Dora exclaimed. Mary looked annoyed and moved



uneasily, as she said: "To make a long story short, I copied every word of my graduating essay!"

"Oh! that's nothing," remarked Dora, "I never wrote one of mine."

"Don't interrupt me," Mary answered, "I copied verbatim from one of T. S. Arthur's books, because I knew they were not often read. You remember the subject, 'Blessed Are the Beloved.' The temptation and the opportunity came and I yielded. I was just as guilty as poor James Barton when he forged his uncle's check to buy his engagement ring, everybody deserted him, even his sweetheart; I don't wonder that he killed himself—he was a fine fellow, too."

"You certainly could not expect any girl to marry him after that," said Dora.

Without replying, Mary continued: "This is not all. The rest, Dora will undoubtedly think very reprehensible. You remember the professor from Amherst, that asked to be introduced to me after the graduating exercises; you remember he followed us to the mountains that summer. I liked him from the first, I suppose I loved him.



Before the summer was over he asked me to be his wife. I simply could not. I had to hear that essay praised by my family and friends, and though he had never spoken of it, I imagined I should be obliged to hear how it had attracted him, and I fancied our children being told how he heard that essay, and so forth, and so forth, and my sensations and his, if some day he should come upon the original. I refused him and then I suffered for two years, till I could bear it no longer and I determined to tell him.

“You remember the time we spent the holidays in Philadelphia and I was two days late? I went to Northampton on my way; I stopped at a hotel; I dressed in my most becoming gown and with my heart fairly bursting with the hope of forgiveness and more, I sent for the professor. He was greatly astonished and when I finished, adding that because I loved him I had come, he said it was not my essay that had attracted him — he had recognized it — he never expected original productions at girls’ commencements, but he thought Miss Farnsworth’s was her own and since I had assured



him I did not care for him, he had sought her and really had committed himself.

"How do you suppose I felt? And particularly as I wrote every word of Jane Farnsworth's essay—a willing accomplice in dishonesty. I suppose no one of you can realize my feelings when he had gone and I prepared to continue my journey, and I suppose it will be just as difficult to conceive my humiliation and disappointment."

"How dreadful!" Dora exclaimed, "But then he has likely never told anybody."

Grace made a place for Mary on a couch by her side and with her eyes full of tears, took her hands and held them while Pauline went to the penitent's seat.

The most striking of Pauline Verger's many fine points was her shapely head and her majestic way of carrying it. It proclaimed the aristocrat, not only forbidding advances from strangers, but also preventing the comforting confidences of an intimate friend. Of all her acquaintances, Mary Snyder was the dearest and yet with Pauline she was never familiar.

"I think it but just to me," Pauline



began, "to say by way of explanation that during the time I am about to speak of I was under some powerful unrecognized influence. I have wished many a time that I could write well and impressively, I should long since have published this story, hoping to influence, to warn and to save some impressionable young girl a similar humiliation.

"Mary will remember the man from California, a guest of her friends at the seaside, the summer following her experience in the mountains. He was a small, thin, intelligent-looking man with shining black hair which, parted on the side, waved across a fine broad white forehead. There was some charm indescribable in his eyes. They were sometimes brown, sometimes gray, always beautiful, with a strange fascinating power, reminding me of the wonderful serpent's charm. They spoke unutterable things, but so gently, so worshipfully, that they must attract the young and unsuspecting.

"I think we all felt from the first that this man was not trustworthy, and I as keenly as anyone; yet, I realized that never in my life, had I been so wholly under anyone's



influence, and I liked it. I was glad that he chose me. I thought of him constantly and though I kept my secret well, it must have seemed strange to Mary that I so eagerly did the things I had always refused to do—bathing in that ice-cold water for instance, and sailing after a storm — I endured torture for the sake of being near him. The thought of who he was, of what his family might be never once came to me.

“On one particular evening, when several of us had gone down on the rocks to watch the sunset, he and I strolled away from the others and sat down too far off for our talk to be overheard. Taking my hand in his he said he would tell me the story of his life. He said at nineteen, his father had justly obliged him to marry an Irish housemaid ten years older than he, that he lived with her until he had forced good and intelligent people to recognize her socially, then he had hired her to get a divorce.

“‘Soon after, he figured as co-respondent in a divorce case, and the husband won the suit ;’ but I will not continue the vile story of his escapades ! I listened with only



pity and sympathy in my heart. When he had finished, he asked me, 'if after knowing all this, I would let him kiss me,' and I kept still while he did so. Just then the rest of the party joined us.

"The next morning I expected him to come and formally propose to me, and I resolved to accept him. I knew my father would object, and I planned an elopement, for I felt life without him would be unbearable. I had chosen an unpopular veranda corner for my hammock, and he found me there. He sat at my feet and repeated the story of the night before, enjoying, I suppose, the torture he was inflicting, and the watching of its effect. When he had finished he said he had neglected to tell me that he had married secretly the divorced woman, and so our only relations must be of the French kind.

"I was not so wholly under his influence that this insult could not dispel it, and I left him without a look or word. I did not see him again. I kept my room until he left, pretending I was not well, and indeed I was not. A few months after, someone sent a



paper to me with a notice of his death and a short account of his life, and his tragic, vile yarn to me was absolutely false. He had evidently tried how deeply he could shock a silly girl and keep her still in love with him, and I listened to this false confession of a low-born vulgar scoundrel, and loved him and let him kiss me." As Pauline left the chair, her manner was such as to forbid comments.

"It is your turn now, Dora," said Mary.

"Oh no ! Julia is several days older than I am," answered Dora.

"I have always thought it was the other way," Julia said. "But I am willing to tell first."

It was evident that Julia Cramer had conquered in some soul-trying conflict, and that now, with martyr-like composure, expecting undeserved punishment, she would make her confession.

"I have done many things," she said, "of which I am ashamed. Any one of them would, perhaps, be more interesting and less disastrous to me than the one I am about to tell, but I promised to confess the one thing of which I am most ashamed, and



perhaps I should, long since, have made you acquainted with my family history. I suppose none of you, who are to the manner born, can in any way appreciate the agony of one, who, ambitious and fit to hold a high social position, is constantly baffled and humiliated by the presence and behavior of one or more relatives with whom she has only a name in common. I say this in my mother's defense.

“My father's parents were poor, uneducated, common people. By fortunate investments of a little money left him by an uncle, my grandfather finally became rich. Then my father, his only child, married from a circle way above him socially. He was not an unattractive man, and my mother doubtless loved him, but she forgot when she accepted him that she must also accept his family. People have fine theories about one's duties in such matters; to practice them is another thing.

“My grandmother was a large, loud-speaking woman. Her voice actually made my delicate mother shiver. She had no appreciation, no knowledge of the niceties of life, which were necessities with my mother.



Mother never treated her roughly, but from a child, I remember her constant efforts to keep grandmother out of sight, and I, who had been given my grandmother's name, was her constant companion on these expeditions; visits to the springs, to the mountains and to the seashore, she, I and a maid. I think my grandmother enjoyed these outings although she knew why they were planned. I was with her so constantly that she came 'to love me,' she said, 'best of all the world.' As I grew to womanhood her society became distasteful to me, and mother, realizing that a change must come, sent me away to school.

"I have always felt that I have no right among you, and yet the fact that I have a great deal of money and could do generously my part in all things, made me feel that perhaps after all I was not an interloper. After I graduated and went home, Adele Walton chose me as her most intimate friend. Her father, Judge Walton, belonged to one of the most exclusive and aristocratic families in Denver. Nothing had ever come to us that so delighted my mother.

"The effort to so arrange things that



Adele should never by any chance meet my grandmother, cost many anxious hours. If grandmother would only have kept still we could have borne it, but she would talk. She was not only illiterate, but she had a habit of taking everybody into her confidence and telling them everything about us from the coachman to father. The day of my coming-out party approached. Grandmother was full of interest. She hinted mysteriously of some astonishing present that she meant to give me for my name, Julia Jenkins, after everybody had come.

“It was impossible to allure her away and I suffered agony in picturing her possible performance. A few days before the party, I was at a girls' luncheon, and one of them told how she had managed her mother on an occasion when she had wished to go somewhere without her knowledge. A young medical student had given her a perfectly harmless prescription, which she had put in her mother's coffee. It had made her feel sick for a few hours and she had stayed in her room. The girl had gone and had never been found out. I cannot describe my con-



tempt for a girl who would treat her mother so ; but the idea of giving those drops to my grandmother on the day of my party took possession of me and haunted me continually, promising a perfectly harmless solution to my problem. The girl had said in concluding the story, 'the prescription is 5549 at Brown's drug store ; if anybody wants it, it is signed ZZ.'

"I had the prescription filled. My mother never dined when she was to attend a party and I knew I would be at the head of the table and could easily fix grandmother's cup before dinner. So I did, and when she turned her coffee into her saucer, as was her custom, and drank it, remarking that 'it had a peculiar taste,' I trembled lest my father should investigate, but he did not.

"After dinner I was so busy being dressed for the party, receiving flowers and looking at the rooms, that no thought of grandmother came to me, and I was going to dance, when a servant whispered to mother. I heard mother say, 'no, not now,' and I noticed they looked at me. When I had been dancing about an hour, my father came



to me, his face was very white and his hand trembled as he laid it on my arm, 'Come with me,' he said, and I followed him from the room. On our way, he said, 'your grandmother is very sick and asks for you.'

"I thought immediately of the drops I had given her and a great fear came upon me, least there should have been a mistake in the prescription. I was seized with a nervous chill, and putting his arms around me my father said, 'My little girl loves her grandmother ; she does not mind if she has vulgar ways ; she knows there is a kind heart under it all.' He led me to her bedroom. A physician stood beside her bed.

" 'What is it ?' I faltered.

" 'Heart failure,' he answered, 'I have long expected it.'

" 'Is that all ?' I asked, 'Is there no other cause ?'

" 'None, I think,' he answered.

"Then I turned to my grandmother. She held her wrinkled hands out to me. When I came near she drew me down to her and held me close. 'My girlie,' she said, 'my own girlie, she loves her old grandmother.'



She does not care if she is awkward and homely and old-fashioned. My little girl. My precious little girl,' and with these words upon her lips, holding me close to her, my grandmother died."

Pauline met Julia as she left the penitent's chair. She put her arm about her and led her to a seat near her own.

"Now, Dora," said Mary, wiping her eyes.

"Oh dear!" Dora answered, "indeed I have nothing to tell! When we all promised, I reckoned we would make up good stories, I never thought of sure enough confessions. I have never done anything bad in my life, and I don't think the rest of you have. To be sure I have copied essays and I have been engaged a great many times, and I suppose some men who are not saints have kissed me, but I really have nothing to confess."

"What a comfortable conscience you must have," said Grace. "It's my turn. then." Grace Linton was the most unselfish and so the most lovable of these girls, and yet she frequently wounded her friends. She was a "born mimic." When a tiny girl, her



mother, from her way of walking or of speaking, could always tell who her latest playmate had been. And now she imitated anybody perfectly, often unconsciously but never intentionally unkindly.

Her heart had been full of sympathy for Julia, mingled with a resolution to love her more than ever before. There had always been an indescribable barrier separating Julia from the others, and Grace was afraid her confession would make this barrier insurmountable, but proud Pauline's action had happily settled Julia's future, and made Grace jubilant. She sat bolt upright in the penitent's chair ; laid her hands on a folded handkerchief in her lap ; drew her face to its greatest possible length, and changing her rich contralto voice to a squeaky soprano, she said :

"You all know my Aunt Lucretia?"

The recognition was so immediate that the girls clapped their hands, exclaiming "Perfectly ! Yes we know her !"

"Young ladies should not be boisterous," she continued, "and to laugh aloud is to be boisterous." Returning to her own sweet



self, she said : " Well, this same aunt of mine has preached one stupid sermon to me since I have been old enough to listen. The text was men, and the teaching, that they were deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. On no account should any young woman desire their acquaintance, and even if the desire were uncontrollable she should never in the slightest degree allow anyone to imagine that she cared in the least.

" Now, when I was thirteen I fell in love with our minister, a man about sixty ; and when I was sixteen I was in love with my music teacher, a man about thirty ; these are the only instances when I have at all experienced the tender passion, but my Aunt Lucretia continually imagined me to be infatuated with somebody, and continually talked to me of its silliness. I never bought a gown that she could not easily surmise whom I was trying to please, and when I banged my hair her disgust was almost unspeakable.

" Well, this grew tiresome, and I had my own theories as to the reasons for her taste of mind and I decided to test them.



"I arranged with a friend at Dayton to receive and mail letters and then I wrote a note to Aunt Lucretia. I burned all letters, but I learned them by heart, so will repeat them as nearly as I can. The first one, was :

" 'To the loveliest of women :

" 'I have seen you. You were walking with that plain niece of yours ; that may have enhanced your beauty. Will you pardon me and write just a line to your adorer ?

GUSTAVUS BELLEFONTAINE.'

"I wish you could have seen the effect. Aunt Lucretia was a little woman, under forty. She grew tall, she held her head high, and she said, 'I think you are mistaken,' when father spoke of some pet theory of his. She had always agreed with him in everything. Soon I received, through my friend, her answer.

" 'Most Respected Sir :

" 'My heart is not cold and your note had touched it. I shall be happy to hear from you again.

Your friend,

LUCRETIA LINTON.'

"The correspondence, more or less affectionate, was kept up for four months and then I asked her for her picture. She soon appeared at the table with her hair



banged as I had never dared to cut mine; she wore the most fashionable of gowns, skin-tight sleeves, festooned overskirt, scant, tightly-tied underskirt and a V-neck. Father and mother were overcome.

“‘What’s happened, Lucretia?’ father asked.

“‘Nothing,’ my aunt answered, ‘I thought Grace would want me appropriately dressed for Miss Hanford’s tea.’

“‘I hated to burn that photograph. She never let one of us know of its existence, and it was so pretty. I was awfully frightened one morning, when she announced her intention of visiting in Dayton for a week.

“‘Why, whom do you know there?’ mother asked.

“‘Some old friends by the name of Bellefontaine,’ my aunt replied.

“Of course, there was no such family in Dayton and I knew something quick and effective must be done. I wrote to her immediately, telling her, ‘I, Gustavus, was about to go to China for a tea firm, and that I must confess to her that I had only given her my Christian names. My surname I had



not revealed for reasons I would explain to her on my return.' Then I stopped writing. That was five years ago, and to this day my aunt is watching the mails and reading every item of news about China tea firms. O ! it is so pitiful and yet I think it would be more unkind to tell her."

As Grace was leaving the chair Dora sprang from the hammock. "Girls," she said, "I have thought of one thing, it is this ring," pointing to a handsome solitaire sparkling on her finger. "I bought it myself."

Julia's sweet face had upon it the saint-like look of one who has confessed and been forgiven. She was no longer uncertain of her place with the girls. When Dora spoke, she started toward her with a frightened, questioning look, but she did not speak. She turned and took her seat and soon there shone upon her face not only peace, but hope and happiness. Julia had been led to believe that the one man of all the world to her, had put that ring on Dora's finger.

"Girls," said Grace, pointing to the clock, "if it's not too late, I wish you all a



happy New Year. And Pauline, may we eat? I am starving."

As they took their seats at the table Grace asked: "Girls, whose theories have we established?"

"Mine!" Mary answered promptly.

"Mine!" said Pauline decidedly.

'Nobody's,' exclaimed Dora and Grace, and Julia did not dispute her.





## \*THE WOMEN OF PUTNEY.



HE committee on club extension from a city federation of women's clubs was holding its annual meeting with Mrs. Granger, the chairman. The reports showed that every nook and corner of that particular city had been canvassed, and wherever six willing women had been found, there had a club been formed and federated.

"I feel," said Mrs. Granger, "that our work here is done. I am ready to start to-morrow for the rural districts; my heart aches with sympathy for the over-worked, untaught women of the small towns, women who haven't a thought beyond a pickle; just think how narrow and unsatisfactory their



lives must be, and what club organization and club work will bring to them. Why, it will open a new world to them.

"I will take Putney first, I went there once with Mr. Granger, he had business there. We put up at a small inn. They called it a tavern. We had a boiled dinner."

"A what?" the ladies asked, in chorus.

"A boiled dinner," Mrs. Granger repeated; "all sorts of vegetables and meat piled on a big platter. I am bound to say it was good. I have seriously thought of introducing boiled luncheons, they would be vastly better than Dutch luncheons, with their sausage, sauerkraut, and beer; but that is not to the point. I'll take Putney, and I will go Monday. I have never been able to get the women of Putney out of my mind.

"I walked over the town and I did not meet a single woman. When I spoke of it to the landlady, she said:

" 'The women of Putney had something else to do beside gallivanting the streets.' She said I 'might have met Caroline Hentman; she wasn't sound, and she was allowed to go traipsing up and down the town look-



ing for something that she imagined she had lost, though nobody could ever find out what it was, for the land knew she had never had anything to lose. '

"I have lain awake nights thinking of the women of Putney and poor Caroline Hentman looking for something she had never had. I should think they would all go crazy looking for something. I tell you I shall be glad to wake them up ; to give them something they have never known, and to restore to them the lost rights of their womanhood."

The other members of the committee were deeply affected by this picture of the women of Putney. They resolved to wait for Mrs. Granger's report that they might learn the best way to reach other women in other equally benighted towns.

Early on Monday morning, Mrs. Granger started. "Just think," she said to her husband, "just think of women who have darned stockings, sewed on buttons, and cooked boiled dinners all their lives, awaking to the fact that there are pictures and poetry all about them, and that there



have been heroes beside George Washington.

"I tell you no greater blessing than women's clubs has fallen upon us in the last fifty years ! Not even the emancipation of the negroes ; what is that compared with the emancipation of women ? It is fine to be the bearer of such glad tidings !"

"Emancipation !" Mr. Granger repeated, as he watched her driving away. "She did exactly as she pleased with a doting father and she has managed entirely an adoring husband. Dear me ! this is worse than whist, physical culture, or golf. If the rural districts take kindly to clubs, I may as well resign myself to a bachelor's existence."

Upon reaching Putney, Mrs. Granger told the landlady her mission and asked who would likely be interested. "Well, I can't say," she replied ; "none of us are suffering for work, and we are not so dreadfully behind the times either.

"Caroline Hentman has gone stark mad ; they took her to an asylum. I think your plans would have helped her ; she needed something.

"You just go right along the street and



call at all the houses ; the women will be at home.

“In the very last house Elviry Scott lives. She is real close, I must admit, but she has plenty of time and plenty of money.”

“Will you join a club?” Mrs. Granger asked.

“Oh, I don’t know ; I might and then again I mightn’t. I couldn’t if it met evenings. Every evening father and I and the girls and the boarders go into the front room, and Mandy, our girl that teaches school, reads to us. She is reading ‘Little Women’ now and I am that interested in them girls I can’t hardly wait to get the supper dishes done.”

“Why, that is a club,” Mrs. Granger said : “Now, if you will invite others to join, and will organize and adopt a constitution and elect officers, you will be ready to federate, and then you will belong to a great company of women, all trying to grow wiser and broader, and more helpful through this work.”

“I never did set any great store by great crowds,” the landlady answered, “and I can’t see what good all that fuss would do.



To be sure, we might ask the neighbors ; but if we should father would stay away. He is too tired to dress up, and he is too bashful if he was dressed, and we all set a heap by father.

“You just go right along the street. Some of them are ‘Piscopals, and you know they like to make a great to-do about things. I shouldn’t wonder if they’d take up with your notions.”

There was but one street in Putney ; in its center were the churches, the school-house, and the shops ; on either side for a long way, further than Mrs. Granger’s eyes could follow, were Putney homes.

There were no marks of wealth and none of poverty. In the winter the street had looked dismal to Mrs. Granger ; now its green maples shading the narrow sidewalks and broad driveway, its pretty yards and neat, comfortable houses made it attractive.

At the first house, Mrs. Granger noticed a woman picking mignonette from a luxuriant bed near the fence. “Good morning,” she said pleasantly. The woman answered cordially, and, throwing the gate wide open, invited her to come in.



"I wonder if you can tell me about this flower," she said pointing to a small pink blossom in the mignonette bed, "it came with some seeds, and I cannot find it in the botany." Then there followed a description of kindred flowers, with botanical names new to Mrs. Granger.

"I know absolutely nothing about flowers, save their names," replied Mrs. Granger; "How thoroughly you have studied. Have you a botanical club?"

"Oh, no," the woman answered, "I love flowers. Father and I have used the children's botany, and learned all we know. Flowers mean so much to me; they teach me everything,—patience, trust, and charity. I love them."

Mrs. Granger spoke her admiration of this particular garden and the charming village, but though Mrs. Fisher looked at her enquiringly, she could not talk to her of the blessings of women's clubs.

At the next house she noticed a neat old lady sitting in the shaded corner of a porch. She seemed idle, and Mrs. Granger thought she looked unhappy.



“Good morning,” she said, “may I come in?”

“Certainly,” the old lady answered, quickly. “You must excuse me; I am blind, and I do not recognize your voice.”

“I am a stranger,” Mrs. Granger answered. “I would like to talk to you a little while if I may.”

“Certainly,” she said, “I am proper glad to have you. Here I sit all day for all the world like the useless city women, with my hands in my lap, being waited upon. I have always prayed that I might not outlive my usefulness; but I suppose for some sin of omission or commission I am doomed to a city woman’s life, the very life I have always thought the worst. I think it is the duty of the churches to send missionaries to these city women to preach against idleness; but I don’t suppose it would do any good; they are joined to their idols.

“Now, there is my grandniece, Olive Archer. She was a bright, capable, industrious girl. She was sent off to school and then she married a rich city man, and now she boards at a tavern and has a hired girl to



help her dress herself, as if any able-bodied woman couldn't put on her own clothes, even if she does wear silk and velvet and furbelows before breakfast !

“I have never laid eyes on her since she was married ; she writes her name Mrs. Richardson St. John Groves. She spends some time writing her name.”

“Mrs. St. John Groves, of N — ?” Mrs. Granger asked.

“The very one,” the old lady answered.

“Why, I know her well, and she is one of the busiest women in the world ! She is chairman of the board of the District Nurses and for the Children's Hospital. She is interested and active in the Out-door Charities. She is president of three women's clubs, and the church—Why she simply runs our church ; we couldn't exist without her !” Then Mrs. Granger described all these beautiful charities and interesting clubs and Mrs. Groves' part in them.

“Well, I declare !” the old lady said. “When does she see Richard and the baby ?”

Mrs. Granger explained, that “she had a competent nurse ; that Mr. Groves took his



luncheons alone, but they dined together frequently away from home, and, of course, spent their evenings together."

"Well," the old lady said, "I suppose that is better than sitting all the day idle, but I would like to know why the Lord sent that baby to her if he didn't expect her to take care of it.

"I have ten children, and they are all respectable, well-to-do men and women. Father and me lived together over fifty years. The first he said when he came into the house, if I did not stand in the doorway, was : 'Where is mother?' and I was always within earshot. Just before his last sickness, he said : 'Mother, we have raised ten children, no one of them has gone wrong, and it is all owing to you. You were always here to help them, to hear their troubles, and to keep them out of mischief ; it's all owing to you.'

"Then when he was dying, all of a sudden he opened his eyes. 'Where is mother?' he whispered. 'Right here, Samuel,' I said. Then he laid his hand in mine, and a happy, contented look came into his face. I never had much money nor learning. I was never



president of anything ; but my husband, as long as he lived, had only to reach out his hand to touch me. It is comforting now that he is gone."

"Are you lonely ?" Mrs. Granger asked.

"Not often," she answered, "they don't allow it. The girls come and read to me and tell me of their doings, and the neighbors drop in every day. I have no right to complain, but I do lead a perfectly useless life."

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Granger, "You have done me a great service this morning, and I thank you." There was a surprised questioning look on the gentle face as Mrs. Granger took her leave without mentioning her errand.

Indeed, she felt her enthusiasm waning. An intense desire to go home came to her. She wondered if it could be a presentiment of evil ; if anything had happened to her husband or children. She could not leave the town till train time, and she had made no effort to accomplish her purpose.

She remembered Elvira Scott ; even her own townspeople thought she needed reforming. "Plenty of money, but close," the



landlady had said. Mrs. Granger decided to go to her and leave the club work with her.

She hurried down the long street to the last house. A tall, sickly looking woman about sixty years old, opened the door to her. She noticed that the house, which was large with broad piazzas, needed painting, that Miss Scott's dress was faded and mended, and everything bore evidence of strict economy. She is sordid, she thought. She told her errand immediately.

"Clubs take us out of ourselves," she said. "They make us feel that there is something grander, nobler, lovelier, than simple self-gratification and the hoarding of worldly possessions."

"Yes," Miss Scott answered ; "I can see how they would do good, but I don't think I care to join one."

"Why not?" Mrs. Granger asked ; "you could do so much for yourself. Don't you think it is one's duty, as well as one's pleasure, to make the most of oneself? And then one could do so much for others. You have beautiful rooms for clubs to meet in.



Why, this would be an ideal club-house, and you would be sharing your good fortune while you live."

"I think I shall sell the place. I cannot bear to see it going to rack and ruin as it surely is."

"Oh, don't sell it ; fix it up and use it and let others enjoy it."

Miss Scott was silent for a few minutes and then she said : "I think I will tell you something that I have never told a living soul. Perhaps you will understand ; anyway, you will not be here to shame me. Do you know what the women of Putney did in '61 ?"

"No, what was it ?"

"Well, when the call for troops came, every able-bodied man in Putney enlisted. It is not for me to say how much the women had to do with it. When the men went we just stepped into their places.

"I was only twenty. Mother and I took my father's store. We bought and sold goods, collected and paid bills, and when he came home we did not owe a cent, and we had over a thousand dollars in the bank. Every one did not do as well as that, but no one failed.



“When the men came home we just went back to the old way of living. Some of them never came home. Other men took their places.

“One of them, Elmer Silverton, did not come back. He was an orphan, and there was no one to worry about him. He and I had kept company for years, but he had never spoken. The night he went away, when he said good-by, he kissed me; ‘you know what that means, Vira,’ he said, but I jerked away from him. I didn’t want to be had without the asking even, and it may be I didn’t care anyway, so he never wrote to me; but he did not write to anybody, so I didn’t worry.

“When they came home without him then my heart ached; I was afraid I had grieved him and made it hard for him.

“They said ‘a few of them had been sent out to reconnoitre. They had been fired on by a company and had retreated. Elmer had fallen. When reinforcements came; they went back and routed the enemy, but they could not find Elmer, they supposed he had been buried.’ I determined then to find him.



“I waited twenty years till I came into possession of my parents’ means, then I made believe that I was going west on a visit. I went south to Tennessee, where our men had been surprised and fired on. I wanted to find Elmer’s grave, I wanted to bring him home and give him a Christian burial. It was my longing.

“I could not find his grave, but the night before I was to start for home, I went out to walk in the little town near the place where he was shot. I walked to the end of the town, and on a dirty back street, sitting in front of one of the poorest houses, I saw a man. I was startled when he called to a child, for I knew the voice. I went near and looked, and I knew the man. It was Elmer Silverton, poor and old and shabby.

“I went in and talked to him. He did not know me. He said ‘the men had left him wounded, and a man, a rebel, took him home, hid him, and took care of him, and the man had a pretty daughter, and she nursed him, he wasn’t promised to anybody at home, when he got well, and the war was about over, he married the pretty



girl. I was always plain. "But," he said 'the people there would not have anything to do with him, and they would not have anything to do with his wife, because she had married him.' He said 'she was kind and good, but she wasn't thrifty.'

"I did not see her. Before I left the town I arranged with a lawyer to send Elmer Silverton a certain sum every month, making it plain that he was not to know from whom the money came. I have sent him half of my income ever since. Don't you know somebody in the city that would buy this place?"

"We have been wanting just such a place to send poor sick women and children to. A good woman gave us the money, enough to buy it, and I think this will suit us exactly. Then you can stay here and help care for these poor people."

"I should like it above everything," Miss Scott answered; "and I know our women will furnish everything necessary. There is nothing the women of Putney can't do. But what about those clubs?"

"I don't think the women of Putney need clubs," Mrs. Granger answered. "I



am sure Miss Scott does not, and I hope she will forget my talk."

Mrs. Granger did not wait for Miss Scott's reply ; she had just time to catch her train.

When she reached home, Mr. Granger was at the station to meet her.

"Did you miss me, Tom?" she asked.

"Why, of course," he answered.

"Do you always think of me first when you come home, and would you like it if I were always there? Do you think I am a good mother? and if you were going to die would you want me first of all, and would you expect me to be near you when you needed me most?"

"Why, yes," he replied, smiling, "unless some very important club was holding a very important meeting."

"Don't joke, Tom. I am going to begin all over I am coming home to you."

Mr. Granger drew her close to him. "Dearest," he said, "it has been lonesome, and I am tired of the club men, with their loud stories and old jokes. But won't you miss it all awfully? I don't want to be mean."



"I shall find time enough in the mornings when you and the children are away. I have not meant to be neglectful. I have been mistaken, that is all. I hope I shall really have to give up a great deal. I want to. I have always been selfish."

"Couldn't we do some of that studying together, you and I?" Mr. Granger asked. "I guess I can find some things to give up, too."

When the summer home at Putney was established, Mr. and Mrs. Granger furnished and equipped an attractive, homelike reading room. They called it a thank offering to the women of Putney.





# THOMAS WARREN.

**“Cupid vs. Theory.”**



H come off ! I know I am weak and sinful but I am not a fool ! ”

“ I didn’t expect you to believe me at once ; but I tell you every word I have said is absolutely true. It is not enough to establish my theory, but it is enough to make men think. ”

“ Why don’t you try it on McKinley ? Make him a Free Silverite and a Free Trader ! You believe in that sort of stuff ! ”

“ I don’t claim to influence men who are stronger than I am. ”

“ Oh well, perhaps infants and idiots do come under your claims, but I can’t see that great responsibility results from that. ”

“ It goes beyond infants and idiots.



Yet the fact that infants are susceptible should fix the responsibility. Take women."

"Oh, bother women! Poor things! They like to be gulled. They have nothing else to do. Why, if the money spent by women for fake mediums, mind readers, etc. could be appropriated to Foreign Missions, say, they would all be out of debt and have money enough left to convert the world! Why not turn your surplus energies in that direction?"

"Don't abuse the women. They are not so easily fooled, and they are not, by a long shot, the supporters of the fakes. But we are not talking about professionals or anything of the sort, we are talking about everyday occurrences. Why look here, a good man in a town near here, made three boy clerks steal! He rented his store room of me, and a woman, a seamstress, rented a house of me. I got the man to hire her boy for a clerk, a fine, honest, clean looking fellow about fifteen years old. In a few weeks she told me the sad story of the boys dishonesty. He had stolen money, something less than a dollar. The boy owned it. By



close questioning I found he had felt like doing it for days and finally could no longer resist. He didn't need it, he had money of his own to use as he pleased. I went to see the man. He said, 'all boys were by nature liars and thieves. He had expected this boy from the first to steal and finally he had set a trap and caught him.' 'Well,' I said, 'you first gave him the thought, you persisted in keeping it in his mind and then you fixed a most convenient way for it to be carried out and you alone are responsible for the boy's downfall.' The boy was so overwhelmed by his mother's sorrow and his own shame that he was about to kill himself. I took him away and started him in a new place with a man who believes that boys may be decent by nature and he is his most trusted clerk."

"Oh, of course, he was caught, he had a salutary lesson and it was a warning to him."

"No, he was not bad, he was simply the victim of the persistent thought of a suspicious man. After trying two other boys with the same result he put his wife in as clerk and he told me he paid her a small salary so she wouldn't be tempted to take pin money."



If he had not fortified himself in this way he would have made a thief of his wife. I tell you if it can be established beyond a question that young people are thus influenced by thought messages, and a system of recognition and resistance formed and taught, I believe that much wrong doing may be stopped and many young men and young women kept upright who otherwise must fall. Now, take yourself, and you are a man of more than ordinary strength; did you never, say on a street car, have suddenly, without any connection, a thought, perhaps a desire, come into your mind that you would not for worlds have spoken and which you probably immediately put aside? Now, this thought given you may have been intentional or it may not. If intentional it was made alluring and so a temptation, and a weaker man, unsuspecting and unarmed, would have yielded. There is no new thought here. Men have hinted it and plainly spoken it since the time of Plato and before, but I want it brought home to people who do not read Plato. I want it taught in the public schools, in the Sunday schools, and at home



just as soon and as persistently as we teach truth and honesty."

"Well, I don't believe in shirking responsibility. If I get drunk or lie, I am not going to blame my father or some ancestor far removed. The other day, the twenty second, I was invited to speak before a school. When the board member introduced me, he said, "If you ask who brought this illustrious gentleman here, I say I done it; and children if you ever do anything you are ashamed of, come right up like the father of your country and say I can't tell a lie, I done it." In the language of that eloquent gentleman I say 'them's my sentiments.'"

"But I suppose you would be glad to make the necessity of saying I done it, come as seldom as possible."

"Oh, yes, but you see I don't believe in the possibility of transferring impressions, without speech, even by effort, certainly not sufficiently strong to do harm."

"Very well, I'll prove it. You show me a conscientious girl, say one who is engaged and for love only. Without speaking to her I will in a longer or shorter time, make her



so question her love for the man that she will feel obliged to break the engagement. You must know them well and be in their confidence so as to tell me at this point, and I will not only withdraw the impression of not caring for him, but I will give another of such devotion as she has never known, then no harm will be done you see. Gentle and refined girls sometimes love and marry brutes of men, influenced wholly by the persistent thought given them by the men or their families; sometimes there is a terrible awakening. Choose a well mated couple for the test and keep me posted."

"All right. Let's see, you are going Sunday night. Come to church with me tomorrow and I will show you the girl. I'll keep you posted; but if a girl of mine could be influenced in that way I should say good riddance. I tell you all these 'startling facts' are merely coincidences! One girl longs for her 'bosom friend,' the 'bosom friend' longs for her and of course one visits the other. Whereupon they both exclaim, 'You were expecting me!' 'You got my message!' 'I called you! How Heavenly!'



Good Lord such rot ! Why if I had a wife and she went into such things, Christian Science, for example, I should consider it sufficient cause for a divorce. ”

John Stimson and Thomas Warren had been chums in College, had taken their degrees ten years before this conversation. John Stimson had studied law and was just coming into a lucrative practice. Thomas Warren had inherited a fortune. He had spent his time in the study of all sorts of Psychic phenomena and had finally taken as his special work the establishing of a theory of thought transference and its dangers as intimated in the foregoing conversation.

The next morning the two men went to church together and sat a few seats behind a handsome, well dressed girl. “ There’s the girl, ” John whispered. Thomas fixed his thoughts upon her for a few moments. When she turned, a pleasant look of recognition came into her face on seeing John Stimson, then she looked beyond him for an instant into the face of his friend, but there was no introduction after the service. At night Thomas Warren left for his home and John



Stimson straightway forgot that he had offered a beautiful girl as a piece of laboratory apparatus.

Usually a Pullman car offered fine opportunities for testing his theories ; but tonight Mr. Warren made no efforts. There was a bridal party aboard too, he always liked to make brides jealous and penitent, and to watch the behavior of the various grooms. Now, he lay back in the seat ; pulled his hat over his eyes and thought over the day. He hated to hear men ridicule serious things as John Stimson had, it was no longer considered a mark of wisdom. He laughed at the old coincident explanation and enjoyed his promised triumph when he had proved his assertions. This made him think of the girl. It did not take him long to make her look around in church. What a fine face she had. He would begin by impressing his own personality upon her and begin now. Sometimes when he had made a great effort he had been conscious of an answering thought. He would try now.

Marion Holcombe had expected her lover on that Sunday night, but when nine



o'clock came and he was not there she went to her room. She was sorry she had not gone out with the family and a little provoked that she should be neglected. She made herself comfortable in a luxuriously cushioned hammock under a bright but softly shaded lamp, intending to read. It was Lent, and she never read stories in Lent. When she was in college the handsomest and most agreeable Professor taught Metaphysics, she, naturally, took great interest in the study, and when she graduated, he had given her a list of books to read. She had just finished Cousin's "The True, The Beautiful and The Good." She had gone beyond philosophy and had studied the claims of modern psychic teachers. Her mother was interested with her. They had taken a course of Christian Science lectures; were frequent visitors at the Theosophical circles and to many mind readers' and clairvoyants' rooms. This they kept secret, neither her father nor her lover knew of these visits. The Manual of Epictetus lay upon her table. She owed a great deal to his teachings. Her home was luxurious and her parents were indulgent, yet she



had her share of failures and disappointments and Epictetus had taught her when it was worth while to worry and when it was not. She picked up the book and opened to the first familiar sentence: "Some things are in power and others are not." In some unaccountable way this brought to mind the handsome stranger she had seen in church, and she had a great mind to send him a thought message. Of course it was not exactly proper, but then in these messages no one could be certain of the source. She put out the light and fixed her entire attention upon the stranger, sending him a certain consciousness of her interest.

When Thomas Warren reached his office on Monday afternoon he found his desk piled high with letters. They were from "all sorts and conditions of men," mainly women. There were letters from prison, reform school and asylum officials full of interesting statistics, but by far the greater number was from parents, wives and sweethearts with pathetic stories of disobedience or waning affection and asking impossible assistance. He put aside a few to be



answered and threw the others into the waste basket. A small envelope met his eye. It held an invitation to dinner from his sister-in-law. "Leave your isms at home" she wrote "for the people are clever but they are not in sympathy with your particular hobby." He drew a sheet of paper toward him. "I will plead a previous engagement." He began writing, when a sharp, business like rap called him to the door, and upon opening it, met the troubled eyes of a superior-looking woman.

"Mr. Warren?" she asked. "I am here to give you indisputable proof of your theory and to offer you assistance."

"I am glad to see you," he answered. "Please sit down."

"No," she replied, "Thank you, I shall not detain you long." She fixed her eyes upon the floor and talked rapidly. "I had never heard of thought messages until I read your articles in the magazines. I was poor, wholly dependent upon the charity of a woman who at her best was ugly and exasperating. Through the inordinate use of morphine she had become practically imbe-



cile. She could scarcely hear or see, she could not taste. Her mind was gone. Of course the care of her was constant and extremely disagreeable. An old servant woman, Nelson by name, cared for her. She was so faithful, tender, and almost loving ; it seemed. Your articles with their clear descriptions and satisfactory proofs made me think that Nelson who was weak and simple might be controlled in that way. I had been told that keeping morphine away from one who had long taken it would cause certain death. I determined to influence Nelson to substitute a harmless powder for the morphine. I sent the message day and night. I scarcely slept. In about ten days a telegram came announcing the old lady's death. When I reached there, old Nelson came out to meet me. 'Oh,' she said 'how can I bear it!' I knew she was about to confess I interrupted her. I never gave her a chance to speak and I tried persistently to fill her mind with thoughts of her faithfulness only. I have made Nelson comfortable for life, but the thought of her distress worries me, I would like to help



you even to the half of my income, as a sort of penance, you see."

"Did you say my articles influenced you to attempt this?"

"Yes," she said;

"And they were written solely to prevent just such wrong. Had this old lady a physician?"

"Oh, yes."

"Did he say anything about the taking away of morphine?"

"Oh no, he did not know it."

"I think," he said, "you may be sure that it was not taken from her and that your efforts and her death at that time were merely coincident, not in any way connected. However, this does not relieve you or me of responsibility. I thank you for your offered assistance, if I need you I will call upon you."

He bowed her out of the room, and then he called a messenger to take his acceptance of the dinner invitation, anything rather than an evening alone, he thought.

He was late at the dinner party, and his sister-in-law took him immediately to a de-



mure looking girl, introduced him, and said "Please come with Miss Norris to the dining room."

"A school girl, what a bore!" he thought. "With the greatest pleasure," he answered. While they were finding their places at the table he told her that the day was beautiful, the company charming and he the most fortunate of men. While she pinned the flowers on her dress, he looked at her closely; "pretty," he thought, "beautiful throat and shoulders, clever Nan said if I 'can start her on her specialty I shall need only to listen.' I will try music." Then addressing her, "That was a fine tenor in the last opera."

"Yes," she answered.

Not music evidently, try art.

"The loan exhibition promises a great treat," he said.

"Yes," she replied.

Not art, try whist; of course all the women are wild over whist. "I believe you ladies are adopting the short suit leads," he remarked.

"Yes," she answered.



"I am sure," he said, "you enjoy the wheel and golf and all kinds of outdoor sports from your evident perfect health!"

"Oh, golf," she exclaimed, "I perfectly adore golf! Don't you?"

"Yes," he replied.

There was a painful pause. His sister-in-law frowned upon him. They had only oysters and soup, and there were at least ten more courses. It was simply unbearable! Oh there was the war, he might try that.

"Do you think we shall have war?" he asked.

"I don't know," she answered.

Another pause and a more emphatic frown.

"We are awfully dull aren't we?" she said. "Let's try the counting game; but of course you must look at me occasionally and seem interested."

"That will not be difficult," he replied.

"Let's take fives, they are easy." Then in a low tone, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5"? she said.

"6, 7, 8, 9, 10," he continued.

She put into her figures every expression possible in an animated conversation,



surprise, pleasure, sympathy, anxiety, all, and he, though not nearly so clever an actor, tried to imitate her. By the time the coffee came they were well up in the hundreds, he was attempting a very pathetic tone when their eyes met and they laughed aloud.

"Tell us the joke," some one requested; but they kept their secret.

When the ladies were leaving the dining room, he said, "I shall find you when I come in!"

"I shall be glad to be found," she answered.

Thomas Warren smoked but a few moments, then threw away half of a good cigar and followed the ladies into the parlor. Miss Norris was the only girl in the party. The ladies in little groups were discussing maids and children and she sat apart looking at a book of engravings.

"Come into the library," he said, "I will show you something fine in there. I want to apologize for my stupidity," he continued. "Something annoying had happened to me and scattered my wits."

"I must apologize too," she replied.



"The fact is, just before you came in a lady told me how learned you are ; that you wrote for magazines on some supernatural subject and had no interest whatever in mundane things. She told me just what to say to start you and then she said you would talk for hours in the most interesting way. I was ransacking my brain for the question she gave me, but I had lost it entirely ; and I confess I was afraid of you but you counted so well. I am not the least afraid now. Would you mind telling me what this strange thing is that you believe ? "

Then he told her all his hopes and disappointments, to his final coincident explanation. He was not sure that she fully understood his theory but her appreciation of the nurse Nelson was evident.

"Of course she couldn't do it," she said, and her sympathy in his annoyance was genuine. "You are not to blame," she continued. "The one thing that I brought away from school — Moral Science — is we are to be judged only by our motives."

"I think," he remarked, "we are accountable for our ignorance. I was as blind



and stupid as that woman who saw every thing through her own fiendish purpose."

"What a beautiful idea this thought transference is!" she said, "why a poor sick woman can lie quietly in her bed and send out beautiful, helpful thoughts. There need be no end. Who knows but poor Nelson's tender thoughts while she cared for that miserable woman came clear out to Ohio, to me, and made me gentler and less selfish. I think it is beautiful."

"How quickly you see the beautiful side. I only saw the vicious, the hideous."

"But you were trying to make it beautiful," she replied. Then she told him of her own life. It was full of joy in everything. He pitied himself that he had for so many years turned his back on the good and the beautiful and sought everywhere for the wicked and the repulsive.

Before he went home they had arranged to ride the next morning, to play golf in the afternoon, and to go to a concert in the evening. Miss Norris was his sister-in-law's guest and of course he owed her attention.

About two months after this dinner



party, Thomas Warren was in his office unwillingly attending to a much neglected correspondence. The door opened suddenly and John Stimson came bustling in.

“How are you Tom old fellow, how is the transfer business? Stock is way up, down our way, way up!”

“Transfer business?” Tom asked.

“Why, yes, thought transfer, you know. Aren’t you still at the head of the company?”

“I haven’t thought much about it lately. I have been otherwise engaged. I think I took a rather pessimistic view of things. This is a pretty fine world after all, old fellow.”

“At this particular moment, in my opinion, ‘tis the very worst world that ever was known.’ But to go back to the transfer business. I give in! I am convinced! I have tried it myself and worked it! You see, Marion, the girl I showed you, the one I was engaged to, had been studying this thing for months and working it on me and I never knew it. The other day she told me about it. She made it as clear as daylight; but I didn’t give in. I looked wise and



‘laughed her to scorn.’ But I saw there was something in it and I worked it on Judge Brown. I had a case on hand. I knew just two fine points that would fix the jury but the judge wouldn’t see them. Well, I tried your racket. I gave him the thought with a thousand pounds pressure! I kept strictly to business. I scarcely slept or ate. On the last afternoon when the other lawyer was making a long, prosy plea, I worked that telepathic machine for all its worth! I wonder my mind didn’t go with it. When the Judge made his charge he brought out those two points finer than silk. I nearly fell off my chair. It did the business. I gained the suit and enough money to start house-keeping. I hurried home to clean up; I was going to Marion to embrace her and all her creeds. I was going to ask her to Christian Science my rheumatism and to fix the happy day. When I got home there was a package with the ring and all the trinkets and a note saying she was sure we could not be happy together etc. Then I remembered that confounded proof business, and I grabbed my grip and took the night train and here I



am ! Now get to work, instanter ! Relieve her mind of the doubts and send her an overwhelming appreciation of my fine qualities. Make her dead in love with me. Send her a regular Johnstowu flood ! Then I'll take the night train home to reap my reward and arrange for the wedding. Go at it quick ! I will be quiet. "

" But John I didn't do it. I haven't thought of the girl since that night in the cars, and then, not in that way. "

" Well, who in thunder has been making mischief ? If I can find him I'll shoot him ! "

" Commit suicide then for you are the man. Those things meant a great deal to her. It's a sort of religion, and you ridiculed it in your diabolical way. Go home and confess and take the rheumatism cure and I bet you 16 to 1 it will be all right "

" What a confounded fool I am ! It has cost me just fifty dollars and twenty nine cents to find it out. I'll do it, I'll take the first train ! I tell you she is fine ! She is way up in your theories, way, way up, almost to high for me to see ; but I am getting



there. Good bye, old fellow, I must hurry. Use that judge story if you want to, only keep the names dark. Good bye; there comes a car! Shall want you for best man! Good bye!"

"Good bye and good luck," Thomas called after him, and then he laughed aloud.

"That small boy," he said, "with his wings, and his bow and arrows, is after all the most potent of reformers."





## \*ZILPAH TREAT'S CONFESSION.



IN the year of our Lord 1800, in the early morning twilight of the 1st day of May, a strange scene was passing in a quiet village in New England. In an open square in the centre of this village was its church. About the church stood many pairs of oxen hitched to freshly painted wagons, covered high with canvas. These wagons were filled with household goods, leaving space only for the families to sit.

Within the church the entire community had assembled ; there had been words of admonition from the pastor, hymns of praise and prayers for blessings from the congregation. As they were about leaving the church an aged woman, known in the village as Aunt



Axy Treat, arose to speak to them. She was a woman of unusual learning, and her opinion was sought on all important subjects ; yet for her to "speak in meeting" was an unheard-of-thing, and the whole assembly, amazed, stood and listened.

"My friends," she said, "you are going into a new country to seek your fortunes. I beg of you, let not the love of money drive from your hearts the love of God ! Be honest, not only to your neighbors, but to your own households. Give to them the best it is possible for you to give, and know that for them love and contentment are more to be desired than riches. Beware, beware of the greed of gain ! It destroys love, honor and friendship. It gains its mastery step by step, and so silently that before one is aware he is wholly subject. Once more, I say to you, beware !"

Silently the company left the church, with tears and quiet leave-takings ; half the entire village filled the wagons, and before the sun had risen started on their long and perilous journey. They were not vagabonds and paupers ; they were God-fearing, law-



abiding, prosperous householders, who, for the promise of the future, were willing to endure the hardships and dangers of a new country.

Before autumn they reached Ohio, and there they founded a New England village; the same in name and customs as the one they bravely yet sorrowfully left on the memorable May morning. For the new village they chose a beautiful valley; on either side were tall hills, forest-covered; at the foot of one a broad, swift stream flowed. Quickly trees were felled and cabins built. The streets were carefully laid out, a large centre square was reserved for churches. The transformation was so great and so speedy that in a few years this forest, teeming with wild beasts and venomous snakes, became a peaceful village, with its churches, its school-house, its mills and shops — a New England village with the old-time thrift and economy, fanaticism and bigotry.

Prominent among those of its people vying to outstrip each other in riches was Abner Treat. He had remembered for a few months his mother's impressive words,



but he had not heeded them. One who, recognizing a temptation, yields, soon loses not only the power to resist, but the ability to recognize, and he soon without misgiving devoted all his energies to one great purpose, money-making. The importance of this was impressed upon his children. His only son, Samuel, by precept and example, was made the shrewdest and stingiest boy in the whole village.

When fifty years had passed the village had greatly increased in size and dignity. Four neat churches adorned the centre square. There were two schools, public and private, for children; two "seminaries for young women," and a college for young men. There were mills and shops, and all the appurtenances of a prosperous town. All rivalry in society, politics and religion was confined to the two leading denominations, Presbyterian and Baptist. Their social lines were fixed like the caste lines of India. There was no commingling, socially or religiously.

Abner Treat's son Samuel was the richest man in the village. Like his father,



he was a Presbyterian. Promptly every year he paid his five dollars towards the minister's salary of three hundred. Every year he gave twenty-five cents for foreign missions. He faithfully attended all the services of the church — three sermons on Sunday, and the Wednesday evening prayer-meeting. Usually he spoke in the prayer-meeting, exhorting sinners to "flee from the wrath to come." Sometimes he exhorted privately, and in every way he was considered an exemplary Christian. Twenty years before he had taken to wife one of the fairest, gentlest girls of the village. God had given them two children, a son and a daughter. Samuel Treat, wholly mastered by one great passion, "the greed of gain," was sacrificing for it love, friendship, and all that makes life most desirable.

One pleasant morning in September of the year 1850, Zilpah, his daughter, came to him in their plain, uncomfortable sitting-room. "Father," she said, "I would like to go to the fair; may I?"

Samuel Treat looked up, his eyes rested on the fair face of his daughter. He



had never noticed before how pretty she was, and a feeling of pride in her possession seized him. "Yes," he said, and as he slowly counted two dimes and five pennies from his purse he added, with a smile meant to be mischievous, "there is twenty-five cents; bring back the change."

"But, father, it takes twenty-five cents to get in, and I need a dress, and I want a hat."

Quickly the smile and pleased look left his face, and one of annoyance and irritation covered it. "Do you think money grows on trees?" he asked. "What's good enough for your mother is good enough for you, and young girls should not be vain; that is all you can have, and more than ought to be spent in nonsense."

Silently Zilpah turned and left her father. "Good enough for mother!" she thought. "Mother has pieced and darned the black silk dress she had when she was married till there isn't a whole breadth left in it; and I and Julius have grown up with no decent clothes, no books, nothing; and he, our father, the richest man in the village! Every day he



asks God to bless his family. He begrudges us our food, and indeed it is poor and scanty enough ; but if I do not use this money for the fair, I must give it back. I will go."

The intervening days were spent in mending, washing, ironing the best of her scant wardrobe. Her white sun-bonnet's ruffles were carefully crimped, and her pure delicate face was beautiful in it so encircled. She had clear, ivory-colored skin, with pink in the cheeks and cherry in the lips ; large, brown eyes with long, black lashes. Eyes that wore an appealing look, as if they constantly prayed for something always denied them. Her hair was black and it grew low on her broad forehead. Her figure was slight but rounded, she was eighteen years old.

She borrowed a neighbor's saddle, and taking an old horse that could not be used in harvesting, she rode to the fair. Her way was through bits of woods, by little brooks, past well-tended farms, and finally through the streets of a large town. Just beyond this town were the fair grounds.

Usually the beautiful things, from the tiniest flowers at her feet to the bright sing-



ing birds in the tree-tops brought joy to Zilpah. But to-day she rode by them all unheeding, for her heart was filled with bitterness and anger towards her father.

At the last moment he had refused the twenty-five cents to Julius her brother, one year younger than she, who had worked for him hard and faithfully the whole summer without pay. At first she wondered how things could possibly be bettered. Then she wished some great overwhelming thing would happen, such as a mighty tornado or earthquake, and change the whole face of the world, and so its people. Finally the thought came to her: "If he should die — if her father should die — she would miss nothing, and how much she would gain! Mother could then rest; she could have nice comfortable gowns, and make pleasant little journeys; Julius could go to the college, and she to the seminary. How infinitely better everything would be! Oh, if it could only, only happen! But she could not do that — No! But God might. She would ask him. He must see it is best so." And she prayed with all the fervor of her young



soul that God would let her father die.

After she had thought this possible, her whole ride was filled with ecstatic visions of what could be done when the prayer was answered. The farm buildings needed no repairing ; the barns were much better than the house, and always in good repair. She would build a kitchen, she would have a girl—she selected the girl ; she would make the house so pretty with bright curtains and comfortable chairs, and a piano — of course she must have a piano. Then mother should have soft woolen dresses, and stiff rustling silks, with fleecy laces for her neck and her caps ; and Julius — she could already see him President of the United States, he was so talented and so industrious ; and she — how she revelled in her dainty, white-trimmed bed-room, in her soft chintz gowns and broad-brimmed hats, and school, music lessons, and books !

When she went into the fair the effect of this picture made her face shine, and her friends asked her what had happened. Then for the first time, she realized what had happened : she had buried her father and



rejoiced over it for hours ! Her prayer was so earnest and her vision so real that she could not stay away ; she must go home and see. So, after a quick glance at flowers, fruit, vegetables, and bed-quilts, she started, leaving the horseracing, which, with its spice of wickedness, was usually the fair's chief attraction. How she hurried !— she fairly panted. When she reached the house she was astonished that there was no unusual stir.

As she rode up to the door the first person she saw was her father, and she listened to his fretful fault-finding. He was examining apple-parings, and scolding because they were not so thin as he was sure he could pare them. At the first glance she was thankful her prayer had not been heeded. When she came nearer and saw and heard him distinctly, the meanness, the agony of it all came back to her, and with all her soul she cried : “ Oh, God, let my father die ! ”

Day by day, week by week, she carefully scanned her father's face — there was no change ; there was the same active, restless life. He was a tall, spare man, but straight



and robust. With the same exasperating care he watched the pennies, and there appeared no thought for the well-being of any one. More and more plainly Zilpah saw her father's faults. More and more emphatically she rebelled against them. In her heart only — there was no change in her behavior. There had never been any caressings or confidences between father and child in Samuel Treat's household ; always dumb, forced obedience, respectful silence ; but no confessions of wrong-doing, and no promises of future goodness. Zilpah hated it all — the ugly home, the straightened life, her mother's submissions, and Julius' unpaid toil. If it had been necessary, had there been poverty, and so need of self-denial and work, no one would have more cheerfully done her part ; but there was no need ; it was all the tyranny of a man whose God was Mammon.

“ Why should he be allowed to do it ? ” she thought. “ Why should not God interfere, and now, before it is forever too late ? ” And the prayer always in her heart, that God would let him die, grew ever more earnest and urgent.



One morning, late in November, Zilpah stood by a window in the living-room, and watched the unloading of the freshly cut wood. It was one of her father's exasperating plans of economy that their wood should be green ; " it lasted so much longer." A little dry was provided to be sparingly used for kindling. Zilpah wondered if, after all, she must give up all her desires for improvement, and make her home with one of the wood-cutters who had lately asked her to. Her father liked him. " He was thrifty," he said. Zilpah knew that meant stingy. She would not bear that " meekly " like her mother.

The wagon was emptied and the men went back; Still she stood at the window. " Would it be best after all ? " she thought ; " but what if her prayer is answered ? If her father died, then she would send this man away instantly ; then she would study and make the best of herself ; and marry perhaps, after a long time, some college man learned in all the things she longed to know about, and generous, and fond of luxurious living."



She glanced out of the window. Slowly and carefully the wagon was coming back, and it seemed to be empty. She looked again and saw Julius sitting in it ; her heart stood still. "Can anything have happened to Julius ?" She hurried to the door ; there she met her mother. A man came running to them ; his story was quickly told.

"Mr. Treat was felling trees with them ; they saw one was about to fall ; they called to him, but he did not hear, evidently he did not see it ; and it fell, striking him on the breast. Julius was holding him in the wagon. They could not tell how seriously he was injured ; one had already gone for a physician." Then all was bustle and confusion ; a bed was brought down to the sitting-room, a fire kindled, and all the possible requirements of a physician made ready, and the dinner cooked for the men.

Zilpah had no time to think. She overheard the physicians telling her mother that "no bones were broken, but there were, they feared, serious internal injuries ; how serious could not be determined now. The house must be absolutely quiet, and the medicine



regularly administered. " Mrs. Treat chose to act as nurse ; Zilpah was left with the cooking and house-work, and the day was far spent before any leisure for thought or questioning came to her.

Then she silently crept into the room where her father lay. The fire was burning on the hearth, its weird flickerings casting strange lights over the room ; on the bed, pale and sleeping, lay her father, her mother quietly watching by his side. Suddenly, like a heavy, unexpected blow, the truth flashed upon her : he would die, and she had prayed for it ! Penitence and remorse were almost overcoming her, when her father awoke and motioned to her, and she went to him.

" Is the kitchen fire out ? " he said slowly and feebly ; " we can't afford to keep two. "

All the tenderness and repenting vanished ; she hastened to the kitchen, and for the first time she disobeyed him ; she filled the stove with wood, and sat down to warm her benumbed hands and to wait for Julius. When he came he went directly to the sick-room ; there was lifting and preparing for the night's nursing for him to do.



Zilpah went to her room and slept, youth and weariness overcoming the natural nervous sleeplessness. In the morning she hurried down stairs. "He is better," her mother answered to her questioning. A wave of disappointment rushed over her. "After all, would he live, and the old, narrow, hateful life go on?" Mechanically she cooked, and ate and washed the dishes.

For hours Samuel Treat lay in what seemed to be quiet slumber; but a strange vision was passing before his eyes. He thought his soul had left his body and was immediately met by the spirit of his grandmother, Aunt Axy Treat. He had never seen her, but his father and the neighbors had talked to him of her since his childhood, and he recognized her. Only a few weeks before an old lady, who in her young womanhood had come with the emigrants from New England, sought him, and repeated to him his grandmother's farewell words spoken in the church on the morning of their departure. Very quietly and kindly she had urged him to heed them. He had roughly and emphatically assured her that he was



perfectly able to manage his own affairs, and would allow interference from no one. Yet from no one. Yet her words had been in his mind constantly, and with a desire to resent them, and to prove his satisfaction in his way of living, he had redoubled his efforts in economy, and become to his household more disagreeable penurious than ever before.

When he would stay to gaze upon his body and its surroundings the spirit seemed to urge him to hasten, and he followed her. Quickly they left all familiar scenes, but it was not possible to tell how rapidly they moved, or in what direction. On and on they went, till finally they drew near a wall higher than his eye could reach, and seemingly interminable in its length. When the spirit approached, a small gate was opened by unseen hands and they went through. They were in a large city. Its streets were narrow and laid out at right angles; the houses were cell-like buildings, each evidently intended for one person only, and the material of which these houses were made was most surprising. On one street they were composed of the evil desires indulged



by mortal men, and each and every one was perfectly visible. One, and the one which seemed to him most horrible, was the street of blasphemies. Its homes were made of the oaths of different nations, as evident to the eye as they had ever been to the ear in his natural life. As he passed through this street he thought he heard sighs and groans, but he saw no one.

The spirit hurried on till finally they came upon a scene which filled him with hope and joy. The streets were paved and the houses were built of coins of different nations. As he came upon those he recognized, he thought, his grandmother had brought him where money could be had for the taking, and he could go back loaded with millions upon millions, and all without work.

The value of the coins grew less and less, as they went on. At last they stopped before a high cell built of five, ten, and twenty-five cent pieces. The spirit approached this one, and, as he was wondering how he could carry enough of such small coins, she pushed a screen away, revealing a narrow, window-like opening. She beckoned,



and he came forward and looked in. In the centre of the room he saw his father carefully counting pile after pile of five cents, dimes, and quarters. His face was so haggard, and he was so evidently suffering great torture, that involuntarily he stretched his hands towards him, crying: "O father! let me come to you and help you!" His father looked up, a smile of recognition came upon his face; it quickly passed, and the look of agony and remorse again covered it.

"No," his father said, "you cannot help me; I must count carefully and accurately all this money; what follows then I know not. I have tried to influence you to better living than mine. Sometimes I have thought I was succeeding, but I have been always mistaken; my influence had been to atone while I was with you. Your time is almost come; the house near mine built of cents and half-pennies, is to be your prison. Nothing can change your fate now. But before you come to stay, go back to your family; tell them you love them—they think you do not; confess your mistakes and ask their forgiveness. This will comfort you



greatly during your punishment ; then urge them to be charitable. They will not follow your footsteps, but they used to do more than merely avoid the evil you and I have been guilty of. Do not stay ; your time is short. Hurry back and make your peace with them."

Then the meaning of this strange city came to him. The worthlessness of the money he had sacrificed everything to gain was shown to him. His coldness and unkindness to his wife and children was made apparent to him, and in eager haste he followed the spirit back. Not because his father asked it ; for the love so long dormant filled his soul and he longed to tell them of it, to ask them to forgive him, and to hear them say, at least once before he died, that they loved and trusted him.

Late in the afternoon, while Mrs. Treat sat by his bedside watching her husband as he slept, he suddenly opened his eyes and asked her to call Julius and Zilpah, and to come herself ; he wished to speak to them. As they came to him a look of love and tenderness never before seen upon his face surprised them.



“I wanted,” he said slowly and laboriously, “to tell you that I loved you, and ask you to forgive me—I have been so mistaken in my life — I want you” — but his words were confused and meaningless. With great effort he struggled. There was a message he fought death to give them, but all in vain.

The few words he had spoken turned Zilpah's hatred and loathing to tender love and pity. That he, the strong, self-satisfied man, should humbly and in tears ask his children to forgive him, — it filled her with a sense of the shame and humiliation that he must suffer, and her whole heart went out to him in the desire to prevent and help. But while the struggle to speak still held him, there came that strange uneasily look into his face, his hands fell, and instantly the quiet of death enveloped him.

“Oh! is it over?” Zilpah cried; “it cannot be! I must speak to him! I must ask him to forgive me!”

Tenderly they led her away to her own room, but she refused to be comforted, with hands tightly clinched, she sat in speechless agony. She kept still and listened while



the bell on the Presbyterian church tolled slowly, thus solemnly announcing that one of the congregation had died. Then she counted the strokes, forty-five, telling the people the age ; and then one single one, that all might know it was a man that had gone. She could see just how the people, young and old, stopped to listen, counting the age-strokes and then waiting. If two followed, a woman had died ; if one, a man. She knew they all instantly decided it was Samuel Treat, and she felt fiercely angry when she realized that no one in the whole village would be sorry. She steadfastly refused to see any one, and her mother and Julius were obliged to deny her to villagers who flocked there to learn of her father's last moments, and to express their sympathy.

In these days there were no nurses to be hired, no burial robes to be bought ; and yet it was considered very unfitting to bury one in any garments that had been worn. Women of the same denomination helped each other in nursing and made the burial robes. Shrouds they called them.

There was one young woman, Mrs.



Hovey, a zealous Baptist, with that christian charity that reacheth all ; her sympathy and help were never denied any one. She was a handsome woman, and her husband loved to adorn her beauty with the prettiest things that money could buy. Her beauty and her choice apparel were always pleasing. She was a nurse skilled without training ; her touch was always soothing, and she was so faithful and untiring that all physicians wanted her. When a baby came, she soothed the mother in her agony ; she cared for the baby, and every mother took her little one first from her arms. Her voice was a clear, sweet soprano with a pathetic quality usually found in contralto only. When all hope was abandoned and death was near, young and old asked for her to sing some of the comforting songs of the church when they were dying. She never refused, but, exercising wonderful self-control for one so young and so full of sympathy, she sang by many death-beds. Then no fingers so deft as hers, nor so willing, in cutting, making, and putting on the burial robes ; and she did it all ever graciously. Many of all creeds held her



dear in their hearts, but the power of custom was so strong that only those of her own denomination bade her welcome to their homes for social pleasures only.

Mrs. Hovey had been asked to cut the shroud. Jane Stevens, Mrs. Short, and Mrs. Brown had come to make it. Jane Stevens was a tall, angular, unmarried woman, a seamstress who regularly earned twenty-five cents a day except on occasions like this, when she cheerfully worked for nothing. She was always present on all important occasions, parties, weddings, and funerals; and not waiting to be asked, she assumed the general management. She had a brusque, imperative way of doing things and of saying things, and she "never spoilt a story for relation's sake," she said. It was her adverse opinion, however, that she gave so emphatically to people. If she had a good opinion of any she spoke of it with equal earnestness, but always "to their backs." "Praise to the face," she did not believe in.

Mrs. Short was also tall and angular, and one not acquainted with her state would immediately have pronounced her an old



maid ; partly because from long living in single blessedness she had the air of one, and partly because she assumed a stiff, precise manner in speech and bearing. She could and did say just as cruel things as Jane Stevens, but with such calmness and quietness that they did not seem so acrid. She had ancestors of whom she was justly proud ; her paternal grandfather was a Presbyterian minister ; her maternal grandfather had been a teacher of Greek and Latin. These grandfathers gained for her awe and reverence from the old and mature. Her dignified manner and stilted talk had a like effect with the young and immature. Probably out of deference to the linguistic ancestor, she was very particular in her choice of words ; she never used a short one when a long one could be found in her vocabulary ; frequently, when they were not forthcoming, she coined words for herself, high sounding and impressive.

Mrs. Brown was known in the village as Lucindy Brown. Her husband lived only a few years after their marriage. Since his death she had lived on a small income, piec-



ing it by calls planned skillfully just at meal time. Her chief accomplishment was gossiping, but of a harmless sort, if such a thing is possible. It was principally the desire to hear and tell some new thing, though, of course, if it was something naughty the repetition was more startling and more enjoyable.

Mrs. Hovey cut the robe in silence. The others would not allow themselves to make critical remarks concerning one of their own denomination in the presence of an outsider. When she had gone, and the ladies had taken their work carefully pinned and basted, Jane Stevens straightened herself and said :

“Did you notice Mrs. Hovey cut these breadths to go clear over the feet ? I think the old skinflint would turn over in his coffin, if he knew it.”

“Why,” said Mrs. Short, “is it not customary to cover the feet when the circumstances do not necessitate economy ?”

“Law ! yes,” said Jane ; “but you know as well as I do that Samel Treat never paid for a yard of cloth when a half yard would do ; and here is three wasted. They do say that



there are those that hold that the souls of the departed stay around for a spell. I hope his has, and he knows it."

"You had better be a little more circumspect in your conversation," said Mrs. Short. "If his departed soul is present it will comprehend you."

"I don't care," said Jane; "I'd like to have it. He's probably found out by this time that he was no earthly account, and the Lord interfered by special providence to get him out of the way."

"Mercy!" said Lucindy. "How you talk; people that have motes better not be pickin' out beams."

"Well, out with it!" said Jane; don't be beatin' about the bush. If you have anything to say, say it!"

"Mr. Treat," answered Lucindy, "paid his subscriptions regular, and was always to church of a Sunday and of a week-day. You can't say so much for yourself for four weeks ago come next Wednesday night."

"I knew before you begun," said Jane, "exactly what you was going to say. On that night I went to the Baptist girls' enter-



tainment. Of course I could have given my two shillings and gone to prayer-meeting. But I didn't choose to. The money they made all went to the Widow Harris, and the land knows she needed it. I am not beholden to you or nobody else, and I'd do the very same thing again. In my Bible I can find about one allusion to goin' to meetin'; but the times the poor is spoke of, and the times we're told to care for 'em, you can't count on the fingers of both hands, with the thumbs, thrown in. I s'pose my Bible and Samuel Treat's are pretty much alike; and will you just mention one instance when he done anything for the poor?"

Neither woman answered. Both felt sure there were more allusions to going to meeting in the Bible. They remembered one, "Not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together," but their recollection stopped there. Lucindy determined to stop at the minister's and mark all the allusions to going to meeting that could be found in the concordance in his big Bible. Mrs. Short finally said with great dignity, "Does the family contemplate dressin' in mournin'?"



She meant this to be a desire to check all further dispute ; but they knew as well as if she had said so that she did not answer Jane because she could not.

"No," said Jane, "since Mr. Treat was asked to give something to buy mourning for the Widow Jones, he has preached against it from the house-tops. She couldn't go against his opinions right at first."

"Well," said Lucindy, "just wait a spell ; won't there be high-flying times ? They say there ain't no will, and there's a pretty snug pile for all three. My ! won't Zilpah go it ?"

"I don't know," said Jane ; "she's about the worst hurt of anybody ; she ain't been out of her room sence he died and she scarcely eats or drinks."

"Well, it can't be grievin' for him," said Lucindy. "No doubt she's under conviction. Standin' in the presence of death would be likely to affect such a girl. I've no doubt she'll join the church on the day of her father's funeral. Wouldn't it be beautiful ?"

When they separated, Lucindy, con-



vinced by her own thought, told every one she met, calling at many houses, that "Zilpah Treat was under conviction and would likely join the church on the day of the funeral."

The funeral was over. Mechanically Zilpah had dressed herself and gone to the church. She had heard the minister, who knew nothing of her father except that he paid his subscription and came regularly to the services, eulogize him as few men were eulogized. She had seen him lowered into the grave. She had heard the sod fall with that sickening, echoless blow upon the coffin lid. She had come home and again gone to her room, refusing to be comforted.

After a few days Julius persuaded her to drive with him. "Why in the world do you grieve so?" he asked. "Did you really love him?" hoping he might reassure her and comfort her she said.

"O Julius! Are you glad he is dead? Do you really think it is better so?"

"Oh!" he answered, "I could hardly say that; I couldn't be so mean as to wish my father dead; but now I shall have a



chance to do easily what I had planned to do at the hardest. I had intended to run away and earn my own living and an education. There's lots of money, Zilpah, and we can go to school now."

But Zilpah had only heard "I couldn't be so mean as to wish my father dead." These words kept ringing in her ears. "Julius, O Julius! If you only knew!" she thought. "Can I tell him? No, he must not despise me. I will tell no one; after awhile I shall myself forget."

Days, weeks, months passed, but Zilpah did not forget. In accordance with her pastor's urgent solicitation, she joined the church. The estate was settled. Her portion was a generous one. The house was enlarged and made attractive. A girl was employed to do the work, and her mother's sweet face had lost its anxious, careworn look, she also wore the soft woolen gowns Zilpah had planned for her. Julius was already distinguishing himself at school, and Zilpah, mechanically and without interest, was trying to do the things she had so joyously planned before they were possible.



But the burden on her heart grew only greater and greater. Her face was pale and her step languid. Friends advised a change of scene, and Zilpah and her mother went to the home of their ancestors. But no change of scene and no physician brought back the color to Zilpah's cheeks, the light to her eyes, and her quick, elastic step. The Great Physician did not come in answer to her pleading and lift the burden from her heart.

Zilpah zealously guarded her secret till finally, when her every effort for relief had failed, she decided to confess to some one and be told what to do. She chose Mrs. Hovey and immediately started for her. For the first time in her life she stood at her door. She rang the bell and then, trembling in every limb, turned and hurried away.

Before she reached the gate the door was opened. "Oh?" said Mrs. Hovey, "did you ring more than once?" And intuitively feeling the girl's errand to be confidential, she put her arm about her and drew her to her own room.

"I have to tell you something terrible," said Zilpah; "I must do it quickly or I shall



run away." Then she told all of it, justly, sparing neither herself nor her father.

When she had finished Mrs. Hovey said: "Why, child, God can help you; though our sins be as scarlet, he can make them whiter than snow."

"I know," said Zilpah, "but he does not; I have prayed day and night for weeks."

"Perhaps," said her friend, "you are refusing to do what God has commanded and he withholds the blessing till you do it."

"What can it be?" said Zilpah.

"You have never been baptized."

"Oh, yes!" she answered, "when a little baby, and I have lately joined the church."

"But do you not know that is not baptism? A little sprinkling of water on a baby's head is not being 'buried with Christ in baptism.' You must be converted first and then baptized, and God will surely bless you, for he has promised. Come to the church — our church, if your mother is willing. Ask the people to pray for you. Repent, believe, be baptized; that is all that is required."



Zilpah went away encouraged. If that was all, she did repent ; she would believe and be baptized. Soon she had met all the requirements of the church and the day for her baptism was fixed. Zilpah had not "felt her sins forgiven," and some of the good people said "that her evidences were hardly clear enough ;" and yet there was so much proof : the requirements of the church were met, and likely after her baptism the blessing would come. They told her this, and with renewed hope and courage she waited for the blessing.

The day of her baptism came. Firmly and without hesitation she walked down into the river. Her hope was so manifest in her face that one present said afterward : "She looked as if she expected the heavens would open and a dove descend upon her, and God's voice assure her that he was well pleased." But the heavens were as brass ; there was no dove, no comforting voice, but bearing her burden with all its weight she came up out of the water.

Mrs. Hovey wrapped shawls about her ; and with arms around her, rode by her side



without speaking, for she knew the peace had not come, but as Zilpah was going home, she whispered: "Wait for the Lord's supper; God often appears to his people then." In quiet agony Zilpah waited for the communion.

With the same hope and expectancy, she stood near the pulpit while the minister gave to her and others, as was his custom, "the right hand of fellowship." Then she went to her seat, and with bowed head asked for the blessing with the bread and the wine. When these were passed her, she ate and drank; but the burden was not lifted.

Faithfully she did every duty. Church, social and school obligations were all met, but the same sad, hopeless look still rested on her face, and the unanswered pleading always seen in her eyes grew deeper and plainer. She sought every book on religious topics, thinking perhaps somewhere she would find what to do. One day in her eager search in the seminary library she came upon a book on the Roman Catholic Church, "an *expose* of the practices of that church," intended to repel all readers.



Zilpah knew practically nothing of this church. She had been taught that its people were a fanatical, misguided set, and its priests wicked, sensual men who pardoned any sin for money. But this book told of penance, hard and varied ; of the wearing of sackcloth and ashes before the people, thus telling all that one had sinned and repented ; of walking with pebbles in the shoes till the feet were sore and bleeding, when the limping gait testified to all of the penance ; of long prayers on stone floors till the knees, raw and bleeding, could scarcely do their work ; of all sorts and kinds of bodily torment, sometimes lasting for years, and then, when all was expiated, the absolution free and full pronounced by the priest, God's messenger.

She took the book home. She read it over and over till she could repeat it word for word. Here she felt was her refuge ; she would go and confess and ask for the hardest penance, and then the free absolution. There was no Catholic church in the village, none nearer than a distant city.

She made her preparations for going. She made her will, leaving all she might die



possessed of to be expended for the benefit of girls whose fathers, for any reason, denied them schooling. She gave little keepsakes to the friends she loved. She carefully packed the few things she would carry with her, and waited impatiently for the "Church Covenant Meeting," to make her purpose known.

The Saturday afternoon came. In the basement of the meeting-house the church-members had assembled. On one side the men, on the other the women, and in front, behind a low desk, the pastor sat. As was their custom, beginning with the men and passing in turn around the room, each one spoke, telling any special religious experience of the last month.

Zilpah sat still and motionless, waiting till her turn came. Then, rising, in clear, distinct tones she said: "My friends, I stand before you today in the sight of God and the angels a murderer! My hands are not stained with blood; if they were, how willingly I would give myself up to pay the penalty. My heart is crimsoned with it, but no jury would for that condemn me to death.



I have tried in every way known to me to find God's forgiveness. I expected it on my knees when I repented. I expected it when I walked down into the water, and was 'buried with Christ in baptism.' I expected it when at his table I partook of the emblems of his broken body and spilled blood ; but it did not come. Now I am going to the church that makes us suffer for our sins ; now I am going to the priest to confess to him, to ask the hardest penance he can put upon me, and then, when all is over, when peace has come, I shall come back to you purified, and you will receive me ; you will take me to your hearts ; you will know I have done all I could. Oh ! do not look upon me so coldly ; think, think ! I have murdered my father, and I must find peace ! You cannot give it. Oh ! let me go ; in tenderness and love, let me go where it shall come to me ! ”

But the eyes of the people fell coldly upon her. The pastor frowned upon her, and motioned to her to sit down. But she would not.

“ Can you not understand ? ” she continued. “ Willingly I would give my body

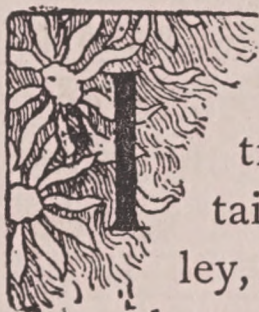


to be burned ; but you will not burn it ! I cannot, I cannot take my life myself ! I cannot longer bear the agony, I must be free !” Her knees trembled, she sank to the floor, but using all her strength, she drew herself up again, saying, “ I will confess — I will do penance !” Again she sank to the floor, and again she raised herself. “ I will be forgiven !” The third time she sank down, but she did not rise again. At the feet of the Great High-Priest her soul sought absolution !





## MISS BREMEN.



IN the bay window of her little parlor, Mrs. Grimsley was vainly trying to make old and limp curtains hang gracefully. Mr. Grimsley, in an opposite doorway, watched her. There was love and admiration in his face. With a sigh she dropped her hands. "It's no use!" she said.

Mr. Grimsley came forward and put his arm about her. "What is no use?" he asked.

"Why, Henry, are you there! it's only the curtains. I can't fix them to suit me," she answered.

"You look fearfully tired, Irene," he said, "do you think clubs pay? Whenever you have a paper you are sick for a week, and if the club meets here, a regular spring cleaning is necessary."



"Yes," she answered, "I learn a good deal, and then the nicest women in town belong to this club. Of course, I had to clean. If it had rained, every last woman would have had to go upstairs."

"Let me see," said Mr. Grimsley, "there are twenty women in the club, and if they needed to go up stairs, it would take five bed rooms, not to mention halls and a bath room."

"But, Henry! When anyone goes upstairs, the whole upper story must be in perfect order and open, particularly if Mrs. Irwin is expected."

"Don't mention Mrs. Irwin, please. Poor Irwin! Why, last night in that pouring rain he stood outside under an umbrella to smoke his cigar. I felt it was a case for the Humane Society."

"He doesn't seem unhappy," she answered, "and their house is simply immaculate. Never mind, she may lift every spread and peak into every corner; ours is immaculate to-day."

"And you are worn out," he said. "I don't like it. I wish — but gracious, here she comes!" and he was gone.



Mrs. Grimsley had put a card on the door asking the Wednesday club to walk in. Mr. Grimsley had barely made his exit when Mrs. Irwin, flushed and breathless, hurried in. "Am I too early?" she asked. I always aim to be prompt; yes, I will go up stairs. Which room?"

"It doesn't make any difference," Mrs. Grimsley answered, with such evident satisfaction that there flashed before Mrs. Irwin's mental vision a vivid picture of vigorous house-cleaning.

The members of the Wednesday club were as Mrs. Grimsley had said, "the nicest women in town;" that is, women chosen from the "best society," having either money, renown or family antiquity.

Mr. Irwin was a lecturer of no mean reputation. Mrs. Irwin was satisfied with him and with herself. She had "a raging antipathy to flies, dust, whist parties and new women." To possess a well-appointed and well-kept house, she considered woman's most praiseworthy ambition. She urged the club to study "Domestic Economy."

Mrs. Poundstone was a member because



Mr. Poundstone was rich and she was generous. She was usually ill or out of town on the days appointed for her papers. On one occasion the ladies assembled to hear that she had "forgotten entirely that it was her day," explaining good naturedly, that she "must be demented in her mind." Mrs. Poundstone did not care what they studied if the papers were only short. "It was so tiresome to listen and so much pleasanter to talk."

Mrs. Grey was the wife of a bishop. She felt competent and willing to manage the affairs of the club and was astonished and grieved that her plans did not always meet with approbation. She urged the study of the Old Testament Scriptures. She said "the profound ignorance of all classes as to the shorter books of the Old Testament was appalling." She asked if "there was one member of that club who was familiar with Habakkuk, for instance ; with its picture of its present day corruption and its prophecy of fearful judgment !"

Mrs. Storm's husband was a politician. He had been a member of Congress. She



was an ambitious woman, firmly believing in "Woman's Rights," devoting her energies to the formation of women's clubs, confident that an organization could be formed large enough to take the legislature by storm if women could be made to feel their duty in the matter. The indifference of the club in matters so important to her caused her great annoyance, and really made her feel that "after all, they were women of small resources and narrow vision."

There were the wives of artists, clergymen and physicians, more or less interested in these particular lines. Most of the club, having husbands with general interests, were not specialists, but they were not commonplace.

The majority were well bred. They listened attentively to every paper and gave encyclopaedic productions on their days.

A few listened or not, as it pleased them, and were always ready with prompt and indisputable opinions. The club had not been able to agree upon any line of study. Each member chose a theme for the day appointed for her. The industrious usually



learned the subject and prepared for the discussion.

Today Miss Bremen had the paper. She was the only unmarried member, a handsome, brilliant woman about thirty years old. People called her queer, mainly because having a fine house and a large income she cared little for society and popular charities. She was interested in all new theories on all subjects. She was generous to the unfortunate, especially those whose own wrong-doing had brought misfortune.

Lately she had been intimate with Mrs. Storms and had been persuaded to run for the school board. Just before the election she had withdrawn. During the campaign she had said much about political integrity, honest elections and an economical use of the people's money, and a general reformation of all abuses, claiming that woman given the right of franchise would speedily bring about a political and municipal milenium.

Naturally the ladies expected a paper on some political topic and the leaders in discussions had posted themselves in the current political literature of the party to



which the male portions of their respective families belonged.

When Miss Bremen arose, her perfect gown, her beautiful face and graceful posture made manifest the admiration of everybody in the room. When she announced her subject, "A Short Study in Theosophy," surprise and disappointment was equally evident from many.

Miss Bremen began with the Neo-Platonic Theosophy of the second century, giving clear and entertaining accounts of Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus, including their peculiar philosophy, their beautiful lives and their miraculous deeds. She then gave a history of the present school of Theosophy; a description of its charming home, a clear statement of its peculiar beliefs, ending with the life and possibilities claimed by the adepts.

When she had finished there fell upon the club that silence so embarrassing to a speaker, which so often follows the presentation of any belief antagonistic to the opinions of the hearers. Mrs. Poundstone whispered to her neighbor: "Well, I always thought



her queer, but I supposed she was a Christian."

Mrs. Grey, straightening and assuming an expression of dignified resistance, asked, "Are we to understand that you believe all this, Miss Bremen?"

"I cannot quite understand the astral body," Miss Bremen answered, "and I am not sure about the transmigration of souls."

Mrs. Grey answered, "That an astral body is not mentioned in the Scriptures is sufficient proof that there is no such thing, and the character of future rewards and punishments is so clearly set forth that he who runs may read."

"I am not so sure," Miss Bremen said, "perhaps the punishments of the Theosophists are as well founded as the Orthodox Hades. For my own part, I am satisfied that punishment sufficiently bitter is meted out to each wrongdoer here."

Mrs. Grey was manifestly too shocked to reply.

"Mr. Irwin, in one of his lectures, speaks of the 'incomprehensible twaddle of a recent Theosophist,'" Mrs. Irwin remarked.



"Many think," Mrs. Prentiss said, "that some of the most noted writers believed in metempsychosis ; Shakespeare and Robert Browning, for instance."

"Well," said Mrs. Storms, "it doesn't matter to us whether Theosophy is right or wrong, but we would like to know why Miss Bremen withdrew from a race when she had all but won."

Miss Bremen flushed, but she answered promptly, "My reasons were purely personal."

"Do you still believe in woman suffrage?" some one asked.

"No," Miss Bremen answered.

"Well," Mrs. Poundstone said, "neither do we, most of us, but we would like to know your reasons, all the same."

"I had been led to believe," Miss Bremen answered, "that opening the polls and political positions to women would after awhile so purify and ennoble politics that the necessary publicity and vulgar associations should not be considered. I had not stopped to think that the foundation of such a belief lay in the supposition that the majority of



good and wise women is greater than the majority of good and wise men. Years ago Mrs. Jameson, after an impartial and exhaustive study of female sovereigns from Semiramis of Assyria to Catherine II of Russia, said :

““On the whole, it seems indisputable that the experiments hitherto made in the way of female government, have been signally unfortunate and that women called to empire have, in most cases, been conspicuously unhappy or criminal. So that were we to judge by the past it might be decided at once that the power which belongs to us as a sex is not properly or naturally that of the scepter or the sword.’

“I think any one of us, from our limited observation, which, after all, is a fair sample of the great whole, must be convinced that in our own day and generation the number of wise and good women does not exceed the number of wise and good men.”

An audible groan of dissent followed these words. A babel of voices followed the groan. It was impossible to hear distinctly what anyone was saying. But occa-



sionally Miss Bremen heard, "How absurd !  
"Better than men !" "I think so." "Take  
temperance and church work !" "Of  
course." "It has always been so." "Men  
as good as women !" "Everybody knows !"  
"And for a woman to say it ?" "What will  
we hear next ?" — till the president rapped  
loudly and reminded the ladies that they  
were expected at Mrs. Brown's tea, and  
adjourned the meeting.

Miss Bremen did not go with the others,  
Mrs. Grimsley invited her to stay and have  
a cup of tea with her. They went into a  
cosy sitting-room, where from a large window  
they could see the glories of the setting sun.

"How beautiful ?" Miss Bremen ex-  
claimed, "and how very insignificant all our  
talk seems."

"I enjoyed your paper," Mrs. Grimsley  
said, "I have no time to study these things  
and I was glad to know just what Theosophy  
is."

"Do you care for woman's rights ?"  
Miss Bremen asked.

"No," she said. "I should be sorry to  
feel that I ought to care."



"I would like to tell you," Miss Bremen said, "about my campaign, but if I do I shall want to tell you all about me, and I am afraid to do that. I am afraid you will not care for me any more."

"I cannot think of anything you could tell me that would lessen my friendship for you," Mrs. Grimsley answered.

"I think I ought to tell you," Miss Bremen said, "perhaps I ought to tell everybody, but I cannot. I think you knew nothing of me before I came here to take possession of my grandfather's home and fortune. That was five years ago.

"My home was in a large Western city. My father died when I was a baby. My mother was a good and beautiful woman. She was full of sympathy for everybody in distress. She was the leader in many charitable organizations and her time was so occupied that I saw little of her. My mother believed in early marriages! Before I was thirteen I felt that the girls most to be envied were those sought by men. I had many baeux, of course, as all were welcomed, and great liberty as to frequency and hours was



allowed. One was especially fascinating to me. I was sixteen and he was over thirty. He was a handsome, dashing, popular man and he treated me as if I were a queen. Soon he was thought by everybody to be my lover.

“He visited me constantly. I was miserable when away from him and rapturously happy when he was near. I yielded to him in all that he asked of me. He was called away from town. He promised to come back, but he did not come. Soon he stopped writing, and in a few years he died. His desertion, the cruel disappointment and the fearful self-accusation were more than I could bear. My health failed. I was sent from one physician to another, but no one helped me. My mother died. When I knew she must I longed to confess to her. When she had gone where everything is known, my very soul quivered with shame because she knew. I did not want to live, I was afraid to die. Only God knows what the end would have been if he had not sent one of his own to me.

“She was a dainty, delicate, timid



woman. Her face was the most beautiful I have ever looked upon. I cannot make you see it. No picture could express its beauty. It was not form, nor color ; it was the soul shining there. I cannot tell what she did for me. Good and earnest people had talked to me before , but she seemed to read my very heart, and, knowing all, to love and trust me. In some way she made me forget and put away myself and with her to take to me the whole world in its beauty and its sorrows. There was so much to see and to do there was no time to weep. I was regenerated in mind and body. I realized my lack of training. I entered college. I studied with all my strength. My object was not self-glory, but the ability to do for others.

“ When I graduated I took up my mother’s charities. In my work I met again one of God’s own — one of the ablest, noblest, best of men. He loved me. He asked me to be his wife. When I told him all my past he forgave me freely. My life abounded with blessings. The best things possible for any woman were mine and I knew it and I was satisfied.



“My lover’s mother invited me to her home. I wanted first to tell her all my story, but my lover forbade me. I went to her, she was a proud woman. She talked much of family and of blood, assuring me that no one of her family had ever done an ignoble deed. I felt that I had no place there.

“One day I went with her to visit a Home for the Friendless that she patronized. I heard her talk to a wretched despairing girl, whose dead baby lay by her side. Her words were so full of comfort and encouragement that I was sure she would just so tenderly forgive and comfort me. On the way home I told her. Her manner toward me changed immediately. She said nothing, but she studiously kept her young daughters away from me during my stay.

“When I reached home I found a letter from her. She urged me to break the engagement. For, she said, as she could not receive me as her daughter, the marriage would take from her her only son and bring to him greater sorrow than I could assuage. I broke the engagement. The sorrow was the deepest I had ever known ; but there was



no sin and I did not despair. I was made strong to bear it by the memory of the gentle woman whose quiet influence had saved me. My grandfather died and I came here.

"When I went into the campaign I believed all I said. I believed women could accomplish all that I promised. After awhile, a woman, the organizer and leader of "The Working Women's Clubs," came to me and said that she could control a large number of votes, and if I would promise, if elected, to work for her daughter, who wanted to be principal of our grammar school, she would promise those votes to me. Upon inquiry, I learned the girl was well fitted for the place and I promised.

"Soon another woman came to me. She said she knew that all the women in her church (the largest in our ward) would vote as she urged them. She said she wanted a position as teacher for her seamstress's daughter, for she could not keep both and she needed the mother. If I would promise to work for this girl she would work for me and her influence was great in her own circle outside the church as well as in it. I found



the girl wholly unfit for a teacher's position. I needed the support of the women in that church. When I spoke of my anxiety to one of our party leaders, she said, 'You can promise and then find it impossible to elect her and tell no falsehood.' I am ashamed to say that I promised.

"When everything seemed prosperous I received an anonymous letter from a woman, saying she did not believe in women setting themselves up over men, and if I did not withdraw my name she would publish on the first page of every paper in town all she knew about me. I do not know who she was, nor what she meant. I hope it was only my promise to the incapable girl. I knew the papers would be glad to publish anything against me. I was dissappointed and disgusted and glad to withdraw. I shall not blame you if you send me away from the club and away from your home."

Mrs. Grimsley reached her hand to her and was about to speak when her little daughter came running in. She hurried to Miss Bremen and jumped into her lap and put her baby arms about her neck and kissed her.



“ I love you best of all,” she said, “ ‘cept my papa and my mamma, and mamma loves you best of all ‘cept me and papa, don’t you, mamma ? ”

And Mrs. Grimsley answered, “ Yes, best of all.”





## \*THE CHALK LINE.



Funeral was over. Thalia and Olive Mason stood in their doorway talking with the minister. The neighbors had returned chairs borrowed for the funeral, and removed all traces of sickness and death from the house. The minister, tall, dignified and reserved gazed upon them solemnly and as he went away said : " May the Lord use this affliction to the enlightenment of your understandings and the purification of your hearts." Anything less stilted would have seemed unbecoming, and the sisters felt that in some solemn, appropriate way the minister had pronounced his blessing. There were no marks of violent grief upon their faces. A stranger would hardly realize



that anything unusual, least of all anything terrible, had come to them, and yet, that afternoon, they had stood by their mother's open grave, and had seen her, the last one of all who had ever held them near and dear, buried out of sight forever.

Many of the people in this New England town could remember when these sisters with their mother had just so quietly and apparently unfeelingly stood by their father's coffin ; but the neighbors knew that a grief deep and lasting was there planted in the mother's heart, though she made no sign. It was nearly forty years ago and the life of the "Widow Mason" had been known and approved by the people.

She had been a faithful mother ; had given the girls good schooling, and had always been ready and willing to make any sacrifice of her own comfort or needs for her children, but to her they had always been children, wholly subject to her.

They had never in all their lives spent a cent of money ; they had never worn their best gowns, or visited a neighbor without her permission. They had never



expressed an opinion that differed with hers.

They had never been caressed or petted ; they knew neither cruelty nor fondness, and now they felt, not that a great love had been taken from them, but that a certain protection, an exacting conscience had been removed, and they must decide for themselves.

There were no great and solemn questions of duty before them, simply the everyday necessities : “ What shall we eat, and wherewithal shall we be clothed ? ” Not the getting of these necessities, — there was a small income, amply sufficient, however, for all their needs — only the deciding what to get.

Thalia was a tall, stern-looking woman, her face was plain, and bore upon it the consciousness of correct living. Thalia had “ always done right ” and she had resolved at her mother’s funeral to continue to do in all things exactly as she knew her mother would require if alive.

Olive was two years younger than her sister ; she was small and rounded, her skin was clear, and her eyes blue and tender.



Her hair was light and curling, and, if she had ever had the privilege, she would have made herself attractive. There was something winsome in her face ; she was pretty, if she was forty years old and always wore brown dresses. There was a pleading look in her eyes, a beseeching look as if she wanted something and if she dared would ask for it. She had wondered during the funeral, how much money she would have to spend, and if she would dare buy something pretty.

They closed the door after the minister and stood for a moment looking at the room, so empty it seemed and so unlike what they had always known. There was one large room, a bed room on either side, and closets and pantries. These made the house.

Mrs. Mason had been sick many weeks ; Thalia and Olive had been her constant nurses, and, worn-out mentally and physically, they were in that distressful spiritual condition, when a trivial unpleasantness assumes vast proportions, and to be irritable, sharp and cross seems the natural way of living.

“I will get supper,” Olive said, and



Thalia sat in her mother's chair and knitted on the stocking she had begun before her illness. Olive noticed how Thalia seemed to step into her mother's place, and she felt annoyed. When the tea and toast were ready, Olive took a pretty glass dish from a high shelf, and filled it with quince preserves.

"Do you expect company?" Thalia asked.

"No," Olive answered.

"I do not see," said Thalia, "how you can go directly against mother's wishes, and she hardly out of the house. You may eat the preserves, I shall eat toast and tea as we always have."

"I'll not eat it to-night," answered Olive, "but I'll leave it in the middle of the table; see how beautifully the quince juice has jellied. Isn't the color pretty? It reminds me of one of the rings we saw when that lady took off her gloves to be fitted, you remember?"

"I did not notice especially," replied Thalia.

"I did," said Olive; "those red stones are not expensive, I've heard; I think I shall



buy one just to look at," and she spread out her white, shapely hands and looked at them. Thalia, making no further reply, Olive looked at her. At first she saw surprise, then annoyance, and finally anger. It provoked her, and without thinking, she said :

"You needn't think you are going to manage me! I have longed for pretty things all my life, and now I mean to have them!"

"Very well," answered Thalia, "it is a blessed thing for you that your mother lived till you were too old; you would have been running after some man, likely."

Olive flushed. A guilty consciousness disturbed her. She had thought of lovers and of a husband, but she had never dared to be even courteous to any boy or man.

"How dare you say such things!" she demanded.

"Because they are true," Thalia answered.

"Take it back!" exclaimed Olive, "Take it back now, or never speak to me again!"

"Just as you please," said Thalia. "I shall never take it back."



They finished the meal in silence. Nancy, the cat, mewed and rubbed against them, asking for sympathy, but they did not notice her.

Thalia felt that she had only spoken the truth and done her duty. Olive thought that her long hidden secret had been discovered, and she had been perhaps justly reproved. Yet Thalia was not her mother, she had no right to dictate to her, and she would not bear it. In silence they sat till bedtime, then Thalia took her candle to her mother's bedroom, leaving Olive to sleep alone for the first time in her life.

Olive's sleep was troubled, and waking about midnight, she heard sounds as of carefully and stealthily moved furniture. She lay still and listened; when the noise had stopped, she opened the door and looked out.

The room had an unnatural look to her, but, strangest of all, her sister was on the floor with a yardstick in her hand, carefully measuring the room; she did not move or look up when the door opened, and Olive watched her silently. She finally fixed a middle point, and then drew with a piece of chalk, a line through it, reaching from the



cooking-stove at the back, to the door in the middle front.

Olive thought her sister must have suddenly become insane, and was prompted to ring a bell from a window, a signal agreed upon with the neighbors in case of burglars or sickness, but before she reached the bell, Thalia went to the bedroom and extinguished her light. "Olive would not speak to her, she "never would again," she had said, "till she had taken back "her dreadful words."

Morning finally came. Thalia was first astir, and when Olive came out the meaning of the chalk line was clear to her. All the furniture had been carefully and justly divided, and placed on either side of the line. On the stove were two coffee-pots ; the company one on Olive's side. As she came into the room, Thalia called :

"Here, Nancy ! Kitty, Kitty !" and when the cat came to her, she continued : "You belong to both of us, at least, until I can get another cat. You see, Kitty, Olive will keep house on that side, and I on this, and until she gives up her foolish ways, I shall never cross the line."



"Kitty, Kitty!" called Olive, and as Nancy came to her she said: "Nancy, nobody asks anybody to cross the line, and I expect to do just exactly as I please." And so the days passed.

The little estate was equally divided between the sisters. All necessary messages were given to the cat in the other's hearing, and life at home for each, except for these talks with Nancy, was spent in absolute silence.

In two years' time this way of living had become so customary, that its peculiar, sad, and comic nature never appeared to them, and rarely to their neighbors.

"Nancy," said Thalia, one morning, "I am going to take care of Mrs. Deacon Storms to-day. The poor man isn't fit to nurse, and he needs rest. I shall stay all day. If anybody leaves the house, I hope they will not forget to lock the door and take the key."

There was a glad look in Olive's eyes, a happy sound in her voice as she said: "Kitty, nobody thinks of going away, but if they do, they will lock the door."

"Now," said Olive, "Kitty, we are all



alone. First, I will put this pretty ribbon on you" — taking a bright red ribbon from beneath clothing in a bureau — "you shall be pretty, too ; and see !" she continued, bringing a red cover from the same place, "this is for your cushion, it cost very little, and how pretty it is ! Don't you like it, Nancy ?"

Nancy purred loudly, and curled herself contentedly on the bright red cushion. "And now, wait awhile, Nancy, and then see me."

From the back of her closet she took a bag. Carefully untying it she revealed a soft lavender dress. "Look at it, look at it, Kitty, it's mine," she said. Then she curled her pretty brown hair about her broad, white forehead. "There are no crow's-feet yet, Kitty."

When the pretty lavender dress was on, and she stood before her little looking-glass, a feeling of genuine, grateful joy filled her lonely heart.

Olive seated herself by Nancy's cushion. "Kitty," she said, "a long while ago, more than twenty years, when all the girls but Thalia and I wore white dresses at the school



exhibition, and we wore our blue gingham, the girls used to wear their hair falling over their shoulders tied with ribbons.

“The night of the exhibition, I took a blue string from my best bonnet, and after everybody had come, I slipped off the stage to a little back room, and unbraided my hair and let it flow loose, tied with the blue ribbon. It was pretty, curly hair.

“After the speaking was over, Thalia and I were standing by Bella Green, and, a young man, a distant relative who was stopping at their house, came on the stage, and, listen, Kitty, I heard him say, ‘Who are the girls in blue, “Beauty and the Beast,” and isn’t Beauty pretty? She’s the prettiest girl I ever saw.’

Thalia was always plain; he meant me, Kitty, me. He was a beautiful young man all dressed up so different from our boys, and he said ‘*I was the prettiest girl he ever saw.*’

“I was punished for fixing myself, but I didn’t care much, for I kept thinking of what he said. He married Bella Green, but she died awhile ago, and he is at Mrs. Green’s with their children.



“ And now, what do you think I did ? I did just what Thalia said I would when she divided the things. When Mrs. Green told us at the sewing-circle that he was coming, I knew he was the very man that said that about me, although I have not seen him since that night ; I remember just how he looks, and I told Mrs. Green, when we were coming home alone, to tell him, that his old friends remembered him, and would be pleased to see him.

“ She did not remember, if she ever knew, that I did not know him. But, kitty, maybe he will come — maybe he will think still I am the prettiest girl he has ever seen.

“ Then, maybe he will tell me how he has remembered my face all these years, and that he loves me, and after a long time I shall say ‘yes’ to his asking. And then I shall tell him how I have always remembered what he said.

“ And, Kitty, his children shall love me, for I will always be thinking of things for them that will make them pretty — and maybe I shall have my own little child, and there will be little arms and big arms about me, all



loving me and thinking I am pretty, and saying so to me — to me, Kitty — to Olive Mason, who never in all her life has been loved hard by anybody."

Nancy stood up, pricked up her ears, and lifted her tail

"Do you hear anybody, Kitty, oh, you do, and a man — what if it should be! Oh, what if it should!"

She picked up a black shawl lying near, and drew it close around her throat. She opened the door, a shabbily dressed man stood before her. He looked up at her, and grinned in a knowing, disagreeable way.

"Do the Mason girls, Thalia and Olive live here!" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "I am Olive."

Then he came clumsily in and seated himself in the most comfortable rocking-chair.

"You're fixed pretty snug now, ain't you?" he said.

"Yes," Olive replied.

"You don't look strong, be you?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said Olive, "I am never sick."



"Now, do you think," he continued "that with your sister's help you could do the cookin' and the sewin' for six more, five on 'em children? You see my three oldest are boys, an' they wouldn't be of no 'count."

"I suppose I could," Olive said her face full of curiosity.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you wouldn't object to building on a room or two and then if you'd provide things and take care of the children, I'd'e, I'd'e, well, I'd'e be the head of the house, the pertector in case of thieves etc."

"We are not afraid of thieves and I don't think Thalia would care to take boarders," Olive answered.

"It isn't boarders I was a speakin' of," he said. "You don't catch on, do you? Why, I ment ter marry you, and by George! since I see you 'twouldn't be a bit hard." I am Bella Green's widower, an' her mother tole me th' hint you give to her."

Olive rose, her face crimsoned, she dropped the shawl from her shoulders and stood before him.

"I did tell Mrs. Green that your old



friends would be pleased to see you," she said. "She may have thought it a hint, as you say, but you see it was a mistake, don't you?"

"Well, I s'pose so," he answered. "But by jimminy! You are the prettiest woman I ever saw!" And he took his hat and went away.

Olive hurried out of sight the pretty dress, and put on her old faded brown one with her hair as straight and smooth as vigorous brushing would make it.

Nancy rubbed against her and mewed gently. "Go away!" she exclaimed, as she pushed her aside.

Nancy seemed to realize that the hour for red cushions and confidential talks had passed, and she dignifiedly crossed the chalk line and lay down on the old cushion on Thalia's side.

Tears came to Olive's eyes. "Oh, come back, Nancy!" she cried. "Nobody would speak to me if they knew, and something bigger than a chalk line would separate Thalia and me, but nobody will ever know, and I — I must forget the exhibition



and the blue ribbon, for the only part worth remembering was not true.

“Nothing beautiful is true, Kitty, except the outside things, — flowers, birds and trees, little children and young girls. The beautiful inside things are not true, they are only in books and foolish old maid’s hearts; they are not real, but it is very hard, Kitty, to find it out — very hard!”

Nancy stood up and lifted her ears.

“Yes,” said Olive, “it’s Thalia, we must never let her mistrust,” and Olive rattled the kitchen stove door and lids, evidently intent only on preparing a savory supper for herself.

Thalia came bustling in. There was a kind, sympathetic look in her usually cold gray eyes. Nancy walked up to her side and stood expectant. Thalia glanced toward Olive, but Olive did not look at her.

“Well, Kitty,” she said, “I haven’t got to get my supper tonight. Those two old men, the deacon and his father, would have me stay to tea. They simply would not take no for an answer. MY! Such a state as that house was in! I tell you I made



that do-less hired girl of theirs' step up! You know Nancy, the neighbors haven't been there as they usually go when any one is sick. They don't like Mrs. Storms and they are afraid of her too. I never paid the least attention when she told me that the chamois duster must be used for the mahogany and the cheese-cloth for the rest. Cheese-cloth is good enough for any wood according to my notion. How anybody can suppose she has a patent right in the best way of doing things is a mystery to me. But I made her comfortable. I tidied up the house and humored her too. She sets great store by her posies, and I put a nosegay on the stand with her medicines. MY! how pleased she looked.

"The doctor said she would be up in a week, There is nothing like having somebody about who knows how things should be done, if only for one day."

Thalia paused, and Nancy hurried over to Olive's side, but she only bent and stroked her soft gray fur. For weeks and months after this day, Olive and Thalia lived in comparative silence. Thalia felt that she had



been denied deserved approbation. She was conscious of an unusually friendly feeling the night after her renovating of the Storm's house, and if Olive had spoken first she would have responded immediately, and perhaps, unasked, would have crossed the chalk line.

Olive seldom thought of Thalia. The fascinating fancy of twenty years had been rudely dispelled. From the dream of a week, into which more joyous anticipations had been crowded than into any other year of her life, she had been roughly awakened and disappointment and mortification filled her soul.

For months she groped about for something new to live upon, but she found nothing. Her books of poetry and romance no longer delighted her. Her winsome face grew cold and unattractive. Lines and wrinkles came upon it. The neighbors noticed that her step was slower, and she seldom came among them. They spoke of it to Thalia, but she saw only the marks of growing old ; they had long been manifest in her.

For several years Olive was only seen at



the church services, and when one Sunday she failed to go to church, several of the neighbors "stepped in" in the afternoon to learn the cause. Olive was about, but they noticed a change in her appearance, and one of them, Hannah Noble, decided to stay all night with her.

Olive slept, but her sleep was disturbed, and she frequently called out in the night, talking of things which had no meaning to the watcher.

"Some sort of story that she had read, I fancy," Hannah told the physician whom she had called in the morning.

"The end is near," he said, "it will only be a few hours, likely."

As he left the house he told this to Thalia. She listened respectfully, but she made no answer, and her face seemed wholly unchanged.

"Perfectly heartless," he muttered as he went away.

"Will you go to her?" Hannah asked.

"Has she asked for me? When she does, I will go to her," Thalia answered.

Her voice trembled, and there was an



anxious, distressed look on her face, but Hannah did not notice it, she went back to the sick room.

Olive's bed was so arranged that she appeared to be sitting up, she could breathe better so. There was unusual color in her face ; her eyes were bright and clear ; her voice distinct and strong, and she talked apparently without effort.

Her friend felt that the physician was mistaken in his decision, and yet the impulse to bring the sisters together was so strong within her that she felt any means justifiable.

"Did you hear what the doctor said, Olive," she asked.

"Yes," Olive answered, "I heard, and I am not sorry."

"Shall Thalia come?"

"Does she want to?" Olive asked.

"Yes," answered Hannah, "she wants to come."

"Of course she may," Olive replied.

Realizing that she had made all the advances, and perhaps told a falsehood and trembling lest the meeting might prove worse than useless, she told Thalia, that



Olive had said she would like to see her.

Thalia went to the looking-glass, a very unusual thing for her to do, she carefully brushed her hair, and put on a fresh collar, though the one she wore was spotless. "Olive likes things neat and orderly," she thought.

She quietly and calmly crossed the line to her sister's bedroom. When she went in, Olive was intently looking away from where she stood, and did not notice her coming.

Thalia, startled and terrified by the change in her sister's face, stood motionless by the bedside. "Has she grown so thin and careworn and I have not noticed it?" she thought. "Could I have helped her, and perhaps kept her longer, and is it too late?" A great sob was in her throat. She wanted to take her sister in her arms and weep over her; but she only stood still without speaking.

They are each waiting for the other to speak, Hannah thought; she coughed that Olive might turn and look, then she left the room.

There was a happy smile on Olive's face; she reached her hand to Thalia, who clasped it closely in both her own.



"Did you see?" Olive asked; "they motioned to some one as they were going, it must have been to you. I did not hear you come."

"I saw no one," Thalia answered, "Who was it?"

"It was father and mother. Father looked so young I could not recognize him. Mother has not changed at all. I have seen them often, lately, in my dreams, but never till now really face to face."

"Did they say anything about us, about our way of living?"

"No," Olive answered; "I think they could not know, but they told me something that makes me so happy and so eager to go, I cannot bear to wait."

"What was it?" Thalia asked.

"It will not mean so much to you, Thalia, you are contented and happy; but I — I have longed and longed so all my life for things I could not have. Do you remember the book we read while mother was here; the book that promised that heaven should bring to each and every one, the things longed for here, but never obtained? Mother



said it was 'all foolishness' then ; now she says it is true that all worthy things denied us here shall be ours there. Oh, I have so longed to be loved ! I have dreamed so often that it has come to me, only to wake and find it all a dream."

"Yes," Thalia answered, "I understand, I have wanted to be loved, too."

"But, Thalia," Olive continued, "my longings are not like yours. I will confess it all to you now, since I am so soon to realize it, and in Heaven, too. I do not feel ashamed. I have wanted a lover, a strong, brave, true lover, one that should see all that is good and beautiful in me, and make me better and more beautiful — only dreams false and fading here ; there, realities, lasting and true."

Thalia knelt by the bedside, and when her sister ceased speaking, she hid her face on the bed.

Olive laid her hand gently on her head. "Does it grieve you, Thalia ?" she asked. "Are you ashamed that I am so foolish ?"

"No, oh, no !" Thalia answered, and, without lifting her face, she whispered,



"Olive, you think me satisfied, contented, without longings. I have had dreams like yours, only there are always children in mine, I have felt their arms about my neck, and they have loved me, and have not noticed that I was plain and unattractive. They have been glad to have me caress them and control and direct them. It has been beautiful for me in my dreams."

Olive did not answer. Thalia lifted her head and looked at her. There was the same happy look on her face, but with it a change that Thalia recognized. She arose, she made no outcry, but carefully and tenderly laid her sister down as if in quiet sleep; then she went out to her neighbor's side. "She is gone," she said, and Hannah wondered "how anybody could be so wholly without feeling."





## A SQUIRREL ISLAND LOVE STORY.



**N**OW, girls, there is one thing upon which I am determined ; I shall have nothing whatever to do with any man this summer. I am so sick of the ‘summer girl and her flirtations.’ There shall be one exception to the general rule, and I wish there might be three. What do you say ?”

“Oh, Eleanor ! Is John so strict ? Must you write every day and eschew men entirely ?”

“John ? Why, didn’t you know, Grace ? John is engaged, and to the prettiest, brightest, and richest girl in Kansas, though the last named accomplishment did not influence him in the least. I learned all this from him, so it must be true, and I have known it ever since I have known him.”

“Well, devote yourself to women and



sketch-books. I am in for a jolly good time and I don't see it without a man, at least one in the landscape. Do you, Jen?"

"Oh, I don't know. It makes very little difference to me. I take what comes. If it's a flirtation, all right; if it's girls and sketch books, no matter, so it's agreeable."

"Very well, then, girls, count me out in all affairs where there are unmarried men. As for Grace, she will be in love twenty times, I suppose, and, Jennie, with you it flirts itself, you are not responsible; you beamed on that cross agent and he smiled; even the porter in the sleeper took all his orders from you, and did all his extras for you. With me, it would require an effort, and the game is not worth the candle. If I never saw a man again, save my father, I should be satisfied."

Eleanor Pearce was twenty-five years old. She was married at seventeen but her husband lived only a year, long enough however, for her to learn that her marriage was a mistake. Her golden idol was but clay and although there was nothing for people to see, no bad habits nor crooked business, there was a lack of honesty and purity,



the knowledge of which came to her with overwhelming force and overshadowed so completely the good, that in her heart she came to hate the man she had loved, and his death brought no grief. The sorrow came with the disappointment weeks before.

For two years she wore mourning; since then she had been among her girl friends as one of them. Very few ever thought of her as a widow, and the memory of that year of disappointment had almost left her.

She was strikingly handsome, free and winsome, yet with a quiet dignity about her that repelled familiarity even in women. She had studied hard and faithfully for the last six years, and had decided to teach, for she wanted to be busy. She was a tall, graceful blonde, her hair was ugly, it was a perfect flax in color, though abundant and curling; her eyes were violet, her complexion ideal, but her mouth small, curved and red, was her chief beauty. Her voice was low and sweet, she talked well and fluently, and she was sought by everybody, men especially.

Grace Linton was a little, black eyed girl, full of fun and daring. She was pretty



and attractive. She was harmless, and really made very little difference in the world. She had no ambition beyond a good time and a man was quite necessary to the good time, and he must be "especially interested" in her.

Jennie Stone was positively ugly. There was but one redeeming feature, she had a good figure. She had plenty of money and good taste. She sang well and was well read. People soon forgot how ugly they had thought her at first, for she won the respect and admiration of all and the love of as many as she chose.

Eleanor Pierce and Grace Linton were Jennie Stone's guests on Squirrel Island, and Mrs. Stone overheard the foregoing conversation with disappointment. She knew three young men who were to spend a month on the island. She had engaged their rooms and places were reserved for them at her table at the hotel where she and her guests took their meals.

One of these men had asked her if he might come to see her daughter. She was happy in this knowledge. She had feared her "ugly duckling" (as she called her),



would never win any one, though money might attract some; but George Case was rich, and he was honorable and pure, and he loved Jennie. She hoped this summer would settle things. Then Will Thorne was coming just for fun. He and Grace would be a splendid pair. He was steady and cautious enough to keep the fly-away from drowning.

She acknowledged to herself a little matchmaking plan of her own. She had asked Professor Tylor to come because she had wanted him to know Eleanor. She had hoped great things from the acquaintance. He was a young man, scholarly and attractive, honest and pure and she felt sure if the two people could be thrown together there would be no further need of planning for them.

This resolution of Eleanor's spoiled it. She knew it would be kept, for Eleanor did not make such assertions for nothing. That night she thought of a plan which she decided to adopt. She would introduce the Professor as a married man, and he must consent. Fortunately, no one there knew him but her. She would write and tell him of the girls' talk and ask him, for the fun of it, to let her



represent him as married. He need not assent ; he need simply refrain from denying. She would tell him that the girl he would enjoy most was the one who made this resolve, but she would not tell which one. It would be easy enough to correct it after awhile. The plan was so fascinating — she could hardly wait the coming of the men.

There was never before such a dearth of men on Squirrel Island. Grace had made a fifteen year old boy her devoted slave, and Mrs. Stone was in constant fear of their drowning ; indeed, their hair-breadth escapes were the talk of the island, and their practical jokes were feared by every one, yet everybody enjoyed them and it would have been dull without them.

On the first day of August Mrs. Stone said quietly at dinner, “ We shall have three new people at our table at supper time, Mr. Case, Mr. Thorne, and Professor Tyler ; Mrs. Tyler is not coming.”

Jennie started a little when she heard Mr. Case mentioned ; Grace looked greatly pleased, but Eleanor, in perfect indifference, ate her dinner.



"Who is Professor Tyler, mamma?" said Jennie.

"He is one of the best men I have ever known," Mrs. Stone answered, "as well as one of the most capable. You can decide for yourselves as to his looks. I expect you to treat him kindly. I asked him to come."

"Why doesn't Mrs. Tyler come?" asked Grace.

"I didn't ask him," Mrs. Stone answered.

"Now, Eleanor," said Grace, "the fates smile upon you, here is your married man, and he is learned. You can talk Theology. Theosophy, Philosophy, and all other 'ologies and 'osophies to your heart's content; and Jennie and George Case can have the whole south shore, and Mr. Thorne, (if he likes the water,) can row and fish with the most agreeable of companions.

"But what of poor Harry?" enquired Eleanor.

"Oh," said Grace, "there is an infant at the hotel longing for a companion and Harry is just the right age. I have felt like a thief for a week."

It had been prosy for Eleanor, and she



was pleased that so pleasant an addition was to be made to their circle, so she told herself, and as he was such a man there would be no effort at flirting ; she hated married flirts and she could enjoy him just the way she liked best. She unconsciously took extra pains with herself at supper time. She had a pretty lavender dress which just suited her complexion as to color, and whose texture and making made her form look its best. She put it on. There was soft white lace at the neck, and graceful bows with flowing ends at the shoulders and waist. A fairer, sweeter picture was never seen.

When they met at supper, Mr. Tyler wondered which of the three was most attractive in Mrs. Stone's eyes, and so the one who would see only married men. There was no question as to which attracted him. After supper, Mrs. Stone invited them to her cottage for the evening. As they left the table, George Case immediately appropriated Jennie. Grace's mischievous smile attracted Will Thorne, and to the Professor's delight he was left to Mrs. Pearce. He had wondered when he heard her called "Mrs."



and looking at her girlish face and figure, and remembering Mrs. Stone had said "three girls," he decided that he had not understood so he carefully refrained from speaking her name until he could inquire.

"The island seems very pleasant," he began.

"Yes," answered Eleanor. "It has everything necessary except surf bathing, but the grandeur of the breakers on our south shore, makes us forgive them that they break on the rocks instead of a sandy beach. Will Mrs. Tyler be here?"

"I hope so," he replied, and she did not at all understand the merry twinkle in his eyes.

When they reached the cottage the others were there and the house rang with their laughter.

"What is it? do tell us," said Eleanor.

"Oh," replied Grace, "just before supper I went down to the south shore; I was sitting just below the Cleft Rock. It's a very pretty walk, Mr. Case, through rocks that seem to be masonry, they rise so evenly on either side; there is just room for two to



walk between the tall, sweet ferns that grow at the bottom of the walls ; I really felt sentimental, making the walk all alone. As I seated myself I noticed, just in front of me, three boys cautiously crawling under some shrubs that grew close behind a tree that shades a rocky seat, just big enough for two. One of them giggled, and a man rushed out with his cane uplifted, ' You little —— ! ' he cried. He didn't see any one but me, and he tipped his hat and went back. It was Mr. Graham.

" Pretty soon, one by one, the youngsters crawled out, they didn't see me, but they seated themselves where I saw them distinctly. One of them took off his cap and rumbled his hair low on his forehead and made himself look for all the world like that Miss Andrews, and one of the others got down on his knees and took his (Miss Andrews) hand, saying something that I could not hear, then he hugged and kissed him. All three then sneaked off to a safe distance and fairly roared. Mr. Graham came out again, but being sure, I suppose, that I couldn't make all that noise, went back.



"Wasn't it funny? And isn't it outrageous! Don't you remember how he made fun of the 'Ancient Mariner,' as he called her. He can't be flirting with her. He is a poor clergyman you know, and she is a rich spinster. I don't trust him. Eleanor, I am going to bring him here for you to read his history."

"Oh, pray, don't, Grace," protested Eleanor, "I shouldn't like to touch his hand."

"Do you believe in Palmistry?" asked the Professor.

"Oh, I know nothing about Palmistry," Eleanor answered. "I hold one's hand when I 'read' as the girls say."

"Tell me, will you," he said, "what you do?"

"Why, really, I don't know that I do anything," she answered. "I have all my life been conscious of a singular power. I have been able by hard thinking to call my friends to me when they were in the same town and to make them write to me when far away. Last year I visited in Denver and I met a psychic reader there, and she told me I had only to let myself and I could do



more or anyway as much as she. She told me how, and I have tried with my friends, and have told the truth about strangers by holding their letters or, if present, by holding their hands. I don't like to do it. I simply give myself up and if I speak at all I must tell what comes to me. It is not always pleasant to tell or agreeable to hear."

"I should be very glad," he said, "to see something of the kind. I never have and I confess it doesn't seem probable to me. Do you not think it is imagination?"

"It may be," she replied, "but it imagines correctly about people I have never seen and about whom I have never heard, but, as I said, I do not like to do it."

"Oh, there they are!" exclaimed Grace, "I will call them in," and before any one could stop her she was out on the walk talking with Mr. Graham and Miss Andrews.

Miss Andrews was no longer young. She must have been over thirty. She had always lived in a small village in Maine. Lately she had inherited a large fortune and was making her first visit to a watering place. She had an unusually sweet face and if her



ways had not been so stiff and old fashioned she would have seemed much younger.

Grace brought them in saying, "Miss Andrews is willing to have her fortune told. Please do, Eleanor."

"Oh, I don't tell fortunes," Eleanor replied. "I only read histories."

"Well, anything you can do," said Miss Andrews, smiling, "any game that pleases the young folks." She seated herself near Eleanor who took her hand.

"Remember," she commenced, "I only tell what I see. I am not responsible for any of it." Then leaning back in her chair she closed her eyes. After a short pause she began :

"I see a pretty village ; there is a long street with a wide shaded driveway. Back on one side is a hill whose top is covered with woods, on the other a slow winding stream with shaded banks. I see a white church with long green blinds and near it a cottage. The cottage is white too, and there are thick vines over its porches, which are on every side. There is a flower garden with all the old-time flowers, and there are large



trees with swings. There is an orchard and the trees are loaded with rosy apples. Under them I see a little girl playing. She has curling, auburn hair. On the cottage porch are two elderly people, a man and a woman. Their faces show education and refinement and there are no marks of toil. These are the little girl's grandparents. She knows no other parents for hers died when she was a babe. She is their idol and very tenderly and wisely guarded. Nothing that defiles ever enters the cottage if the little one is near. Her playmates are chosen for her, her books selected. She is taught Greek, Latin, Mathematics and History, and so quietly and gently that she hardly realizes that she is learning. She is sunny and loving and her life is one long, quiet, happy day. She has one dear girl friend, and now as she nears womanhood these friends play lovers. I see long letters pass between Kenneth and Mary, as they call themselves, and the only love story she knows is this make-believe one with her friend. I see one dark time. The girl is a woman and the dear old people are called home, but she is a Christian and she



has a Christian's hope of a happy meeting hereafter."

Eleanor stopped. Miss Andrews had withdrawn her hand to wipe the tears that were falling fast. "It's all true," she said, "and I could not tell it so well myself."

"Now you, Mr. Graham," said Grace. He hesitated a minute, and then saying to himself, "It is mind reading if it's anything. I can manage my mind." He came forward and offered his hand.

Eleanor took it, there was a long pause. The silence was oppressive. Miss Andrews, the tears still in her eyes, and with an anxious, almost pleading look in her face, listened eagerly for Eleanor's words.

"I see," said Eleanor, "a luxurious home in a large city. I see tender, indulgent parents — a wilful disobedient boy. I see this boy grown to manhood ; he is pacing a large empty room, in his hand he holds a letter — it is from his father — it tells him he has paid the last debt for him, he will do no more — he will never look upon his face again unless there is an entire change in his life. I see the young man tear the letter and throw



it from him — he sits down — he seems for minutes to be fighting with himself ; I see him get up, determined, and the look in his face is one of anger and defiance. I see him again in a large church and the minister is laying his hands upon him, near by are his father and mother and happy tears are on his mother's face. The young man is a minister. I hear prayers from his lips ; there are none in his heart. He smiles and urges people to be good but he carries no marks of Christ's love about him. Little children shrink from him, it pleases him. I see him in a little village, pastor of its church — I see a gentle young girl there — I hear him tell her of a great love he bears her, I hear him urge her to believe that in God's sight they are as truly married as if priest or justice had pronounced the words. I see her give her whole soul into his keeping, her pastor's keeping. She is waiting for him now, there is no doubt, she is sure of his coming for he has promised." Abruptly Mr. Graham jerked his hand away. "It is time this tomfoolery stopped," he said, and rising, with a hasty good night, he left the cottage. Miss



Andrews followed him. Eleanor saw tears in the girl's eyes when she opened hers and she was so depressed and unnerved that she begged to be excused and went to her room.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Grace, jumping up and cleverly imitating a popular actor, "I see Othello smothering Desdemona, I see Romeo dying in the tomb, and I must scream, 'Lay on, Macduff, and damned be he who first cries hold, enough!' Who'll beat me to the lower spring? I have a water can there." This spring was about half a mile away. Out she ran, Will Thorne followed her, and their racing on the wooden walk was heard for a long time.

"Let us go," said George Case looking at Jennie. "Very well," she answered, and they went out together.

"Does Miss? or Mrs.? often give such seances?" asked Professor Tyler.

"Mrs! No!" answered Mrs. Stone.

"I thought there were three girls," he said.

"She was married very young. Her husband lived only about a year after their marriage, we never think of him," she answered.



"Was she happy?" he inquired.

"I don't know," she replied, "no one knows. Her mother is an old friend of mine. She says Eleanor has never said so, yet she feels sure she was not happy. She has put everything away that would remind her of him, even the engagement ring. There was no wedding ring, her parents are strict Baptists. Whatever she does is honestly done, I know."

"Is she the most attractive one to you?" he asked.

"Not to me," she answered. "Not more than my own daughter, but to people generally."

"Then," he said, "she was the one who wanted to see only married men this summer. Do you think she will likely forgive a bachelor who has posed as a benedict?"

"She need never know," said Mrs. Stone.

"True," he said. "I had not thought of that. Please tell her that I hope her effort to entertain has not been too great," and with a good-night he went away.

Jennie and George had walked silently



along the wooden walk. They had overtaken Grace and Will near the spring, where they rested after their race. George had proposed a walk to the south shore. They had passed by the cottages, through The Grove, and the Cleft Rock, and seated themselves close to the water's edge. Behind, and on either side, the bare rocks stretched; in front, the broad ocean, and over all a cloudless sky and such bright moonlight that the dark green of the waves as they approached, the light emerald when breaking, and the snow white foam were clearly seen. They saw no one, they heard no one, they heard nothing save the roar of the ocean and the splashing of the breakers. With hearts too full for speaking, they watched wave after wave come and break and go back, and listened to the silence which the waves alone disturbed.

"One actually feels God here," said Grace. I am almost afraid to think. Let us walk," and she and Will went away.

"What a beautiful life Eleanor gave Miss Andrews!" said Jennie. "Her face fits it perfectly."

"And what an ugly one she gave Gra-



ham," remarked George, "and how imperfectly his face fits it."

"Oh! I don't know," she replied, "I have never trusted him. I know nothing of him, but I have not been to the chapel when he preached, his prayers would seem blasphemy to me."

"Does his face look wicked to you?" he asked.

"No," she answered, "but there is an indescribable something that a bad man carries with him and women feel it."

"Not all, I think," he said. "else good women would not so often marry wicked men."

"Yes," she replied, "I think we all feel it; some put the feeling away when they are told it is false, some overlook, some forgive and some hope to correct."

"Would you overlook, forgive, or hope to correct?" he asked.

"I am sure I cannot tell. I hope I may never be tried," she answered.

"I was thinking," he said, "when listening to Graham's story, that I would be willing to give her my hand and have mine



read before you, not that there have been no mistakes, no sins, but I have always hoped that some day some woman would come to me — my wife — and I should ask no more of her than I could offer. Of course, I do not mean my life would be as unselfish, as pious as a woman's, but it should be as pure. I have wanted for a long time, Jennie, to offer it to you. Will you take it?"

"Before I answer you," she replied, "I must tell you something about myself. You may not ask it then. When I was fourteen years old I sang in a church choir in a village near the city ; my father was the leader. The organist was a married man, people thought he was a good man ; he was surely a fine musician. I loved music above everything ; a good musician always enchanted me. This man flattered and petted me so openly that my father spoke to me about it, and I, while I knew it was not true, maintained that his conduct was in no wise wrong. I was an overgrown, headstrong girl, homely and uninteresting, and I was greatly complimented by the attention of so talented a man. One day he asked me to come to his office in the city.



I knew perfectly well that I ought not to go there but I went ; as soon as I was fairly in the room he turned the key in the lock and then for the first time I feared him. I had expected compliments and possibly caresses, but when he did that I was seized with indescribable terror, and I screamed with all my might. Roughly bidding me be still, he opened the door and I ran away. I have never spoken of it before, but the memory has always been with me, and with it a feeling of such shame and humiliation that I cannot keep it from you, although you may feel that you are offering more to me than I can give you."

"Did you love this man?" he asked.

"Perhaps so," she said, "but I loathed him from that moment. I delighted in his music, I had fancied that he did not love his wife and found me more congenial. If I had thought him vile I should have hated him. I was too young to feel as a woman would. Of course you must be disappointed, but you may be glad to know that with all my woman's heart I have loved and trusted you, and because I love you I tell you this. I



cannot tell you one-half the suffering it has caused me. Can you forgive me?"

"Forgive?" he answered. "There is nothing for me to forgive. Do you suppose I would spread my evil thoughts, my evil desires before you? Can you forgive them? And more, can you forgive me that they have caused me no sorrow? Can you forgive me the stupid arrogance, the Pharasrical boasting? I had not done evil and proudly thanked God I was not like other men. That I had allowed, yes, often invited evil desires, did not disturb me. I am not worthy to touch the hem of your garment, but I love you, I love you with all of me. Will you come to me?" She quietly put her hands in his, and the glory of Heaven shone round about them, and the peace which passeth understanding came upon them, and it was to them as if in all the world they only were.

In a little while Grace came running to them with Will exclaiming, "Well, have you reached that blissful state where you take no count of time? We have been clear home and your mother sent us for you;" then suddenly placing a hand on either head and per-



fectly imitating Mrs. Stone's voice and manner, she said, "Bless you, Oh, my children." And they arose and went home.

The next morning Miss Andrews was not at breakfast, but Mr. Graham was, and smilingly greeted Mrs. Stone and her guests as they came into the dining room.

Eleanor was greatly troubled when they told her Miss Andrews had been called home. It hurt her that she had gone without saying good-bye. It troubled her lest she had seemed unkind. Two weeks passed and from Mr. Graham's continued cheerfulness, Eleanor decided that after all she had done no good and no harm. On the 17th, the morning boat brought her a letter. The little cramped hand was entirely new to her and she wondered whom it could be from. She liked to hold such letters in her hand and tell if possible, whence they came and what was in them. She tried it with this and she knew it was from Miss Andrews. It read :

My dear young Friend : —

I am afraid you are troubled lest you have grieved me. I cannot say your words did not cause me grief. I had felt myself, when I first met Mr.



Graham, that he was not a good man, but I put such thoughts from me. It seemed presumptuous and wicked in me to doubt one of God's chosen ministers. For years I have enshrined in my heart an ideal man, and when Mr. Graham spoke of love to me I clothed my ideal in his image. After he left your cottage in great anger and with great violence, he showed me that your picture of his character was true. He finally told me all the story, and though he did not say so, I learned it was not poor foolish me he wanted but my fortune. I waited to write to you till I could carry out a plan I made that night. I have the "gentle, trusting girl" with me. She is very poor. She loves the man who deceived her, and would desert her, with all her heart. I shall give her enough of my own fortune to satisfy him, and he has promised in a few weeks to marry her. He is not worthy any good woman, but she forgives him, and, indeed, in the sight of God and the angels he is already her husband.

Your grateful friend,

AUGUSTA ANDREWS.

Eleanor showed this letter to Mrs. Stone. She knew she would not talk about it. She wanted Professor Tyler to see it. She knew he felt a certain contempt for her peculiar power, and she was not sure he did not suspect her of malicious slandering. If he could see the letter he would believe in her ability to do what she claimed, and then she felt such pride in Miss Andrews. She wanted him to see what a noble, unselfish,



beautiful woman she was. She was thankful for such women. The world was so full of selfish, plotting women; they so often made her ashamed, and they were everywhere; but the quiet, really noble ones were so seldom known.

She had been with the Professor the greater part of every day since he came. There were sailing parties, whist parties, and hops. Grace and Will were the only ones of their party who patronized the hops. George and Jennie knew every secluded spot on the island, they loved the "Lover's Lane," with its closely shaded roof and mossy carpet but there was, to them no spot quite like the bare rocks near the water's edge on the south shore, and they spent many hours there "watching the breakers," they said. Eleanor liked to sail and she liked whist, the Professor enjoyed both so they were frequently together. She liked to hear him talk. It was so evident that he always knew whereof he spoke. She had learned many of his pet theories, most of them were hers also. She had learned his contempt for anything supernatural or unexplainable and it hurt her



to feel that he did not trust her. She told herself a great many times "that it did not matter in the least," yet she found herself very often trying to think of some way to make him admit the truth of what he looked upon as falsehood and trickery. After dinner she took her letter and portfolio to the east shore to write. There was a comfortable, grassy seat under a small tree that she called hers. Very few people came there, there was nothing to distract her attention. The people and the breakers on the south shore disturbed her, the main land was too near on the west, the north and east were most delightful to her, particularly the east; the whole broad ocean before her, the small spot of sandy beach in front of her, and the quiet swish of the waves alone breaking the silence.

She had not begun writing when she heard footsteps and looking up she saw Professor Tyler approaching.

"They told me that you were here," he said. "I have brought my book, we need not disturb each other."

She wondered why he came, it was evidently to find her. The thought made her glad.



"Please read this first," she said, as she handed him Miss Andrew's letter.

He read it through carefully, and returning it said, "Fine woman. isn't she?"

"Yes," she answered, and added: "Why do you not admit that there are some things under the sun that are true that you cannot explain?"

"Oh," he replied, "I admit it, there are many things I cannot explain, but somebody can. Can anybody explain this that you ask me to believe?"

"I have never heard it explained," she said, "but I know it is true. I should think you would know it now."

"Well," answered the Professor, "what am I to believe, is it clairvoyance, spiritualism, mind reading or hypnotism? What is it you do? Tell me that, and then I can more readily decide whether I believe it or not."

"I have told you what I do," she answered, "and all that I do you have seen me do it, and now this letter proves that what I saw was true. How I do it I cannot tell. I know, there is never anything malicious or false in it. I hate a lie above everything.



I could not lie to myself. The saddest experience of my life came to me because of an untruth. I could not deceive in anything, myself least of all."

He thought instantly of his false position. It had seemed so trifling at first, now it assumed great proportions and his great desire was to justify it.

"Could you forgive a harmless sort of deceit?" he asked. "One used to accomplish something good, desirable?"

"No deceit can be harmless," she answered, "and I am not a believer in the theory of 'doing evil that good may come.' Indeed a good man cannot deceive. He that 'speaketh the truth in his heart' cannot lie."

"You use strong words," he replied. "No honest man would lie, but he might consent to deceive when no one could be hurt by it."

"He would be hurt," she answered.

He wanted to tell her then, it was such a simple, silly thing, why need he hesitate? But he had a feeling that if he should she would shut herself to him from that time. Not because he was not married and



she had made that foolish resolution, but because she would feel he was not trustworthy. He knew he was and he wanted this girl to know it too. He did not like her mind reading performances, it seemed uncanny. He did not like to connect anything of the kind with her. He knew she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen and one of the brightest and best informed. She was honest too in everything, and she charmed him withal as he had never been charmed before. His bachelor quarters that he had thought so pleasant, seemed bare and miserable as he thought of going back to them. What would it be to have a home and this girl in it. How his heart beat, and how proud and blessed the mere thought made him feel! He smiled in such a bright, glad way that Eleanor noticed it.

“Why do you laugh?” she asked.

“I was thinking of you,” he answered.

“Thank you,” replied Eleanor. “I am not often laughed at; at least if I am I don’t know it.”

“Oh, I meant no harm,” said he. “It was not ridicule, it was only joy.”



Eleanor made no answer, she opened her portfolio and began her letter. The Professor opened his book and tried to read. He had brought "Macaulay's Essays." He read them over and over and always with delight. He was reading now the essay on Milton, and his eye fell upon this sentence, "He who in an enlightened and literary age, aspires to be a great poet must become as a little child." It reminded him of another book where it is said of the Master, "He set a little child in their midst." To receive great and beautiful messages one must become as a little child, he thought. Yes, and for poetry and christianity one would be willing, but for this useless and more than useless business — ugh ! and he shrugged his shoulders.

It occurred to him that his attitude in regard to christianity had not been at all child-like in late years, indeed he had come to doubt the whole story. He had not while his mother lived. Her clear, logical mind and her pure, child-like faith had always kept him free of doubt. "If she had only lived ! he thought. If she were only here she would help him out of this strange predica-



ment in which he found himself. She had helped him in everything hard for twenty-five years. How bare, empty and soulless the five years just past without her seemed. How she would enjoy this girl! She would make her trust him, his mother, who knew him best of all and loved him best!" He felt the tears in his eyes, he bent his face closer over his book, but he did not read.

Eleanor leaned her head against the tree and looked out at the ocean. There was so much she wanted to say to Miss Andrews. She meant to ask her to visit her in the winter, and she had fairly reveled in her plans for her enjoyment, but she could not write. "What was the matter? Why did she care" she asked herself, "whether this man believed in her or not? She might meet his wife someday, she would convince her. Women were not so egotistical. His wife" — she so seldom thought of him as married; "it was likely because he never spoke of it. Perhaps he was not happy." Then she remembered his smile when he said he hoped his wife would come. There was something wrong. Well, what matter if there was.



How was she concerned, and what need she care? She pitied herself, for some unaccountable reason her heart ached, she felt the tears come and she bent closer over her paper, pencil in hand, but she did not write.

Suddenly, from the thicket behind them, came Grace's clear, sweet voice as she sang: "She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau." Then appearing, she struck a most tragic attitude, exclaiming, "My Lady, the dinner waits!" And catching her gay, joyous spirit, they laughingly followed her to the dining room.

When they entered they were surprised to see a strange gentleman at their table. As they approached he arose, and when Professor Tyler saw his face he hastened to him exclaiming:

"Why, Spencer, where did you come from?" and introducing him as one of his colleagues in the college faculty, took his seat.

"Where is Mrs. Spencer?" the professor asked.

"At Old Orchard," Mr. Spencer replied, with the children. I came up on an excursion for only an hour or so. When do you go back?"



"I shall leave here about the 10th, I think," Professor Tyler answered.

"Why, that's late," said his friend. "But then we have to be there early on account of the children's school and to get the house ready. You jolly bachelors need only be there in time for the college opening." What a sudden change in everybody's face! Mr. Spencer could not understand it, "unless Tyler was married," he thought, "which is not likely."

Mrs. Stone fairly trembled, her agitation was so great. Grace, at his elbow, giggled outright; Jennie's whole face was an interrogation mark, Eleanor's was colorless and Professor Tyler's crimson. Evidently he had put his foot in it, but in what! If he asked he would likely make a bad matter worse so he kept still, and for a few minutes they ate in silence. Then Mrs. Stone recovered herself and introduced some common place topic, and the conversation was laggingly kept up till the meal was finished.

As they left the table, Professor Tyler said to Eleanor, "Don't be too severe in your accusations and don't pass sentence



upon me until I have had a chance to make my plea."

"No," Eleanor answered, and left the room. How she wanted to be alone. But she would not. "No," she said to herself, "No one should know that all this affected her in the least. She would take her embroidery and sit on the cottage porch and talk silly nonsense to the chance visitor or hear her part in this stupid business discussed.

On her way she passed a cottage where people were planning an entertainment of dialogues and tableaux to be given to pay for some island improvements, they asked her to come in and help them. She did and was there an hour. When she reached Mrs. Stone's cottage no one was down stairs and Mrs. Stone called to her from her room saying: "Jennie and George are walking, Grace and Will are off with a sailing party and I have come to my room to try and sleep off a raging headache. Please excuse me to everybody."

"I will shut up the house and finish my letters," replied Eleanor. She took her portfolio and hurried to her seat on the east



shore. She carefully wrote her letters, five of them, then she lay down on the grass and indulged her bitter thoughts without interruption. They had all entered into this silly conspiracy, she supposed, to thwart her in her foolish resolve. How perfectly ridiculous it all was and she the center of the ludicrous picture ! How she hated to be ridiculous. She thought of her vehement denunciation of all deceivers. It was true, she meant it every word. She hated hypocrites, but then Professor Tyler was not a hypocrite. He was an honest man, she knew it. Why had he consented to play leading man in this farce where she unconsciously had been the leading lady ? She did not know. It was funny and if it ended as his eyes told her this noon he would like to have it, then the comedy would be complete. No ; she could not bear that ! If he cared, he could wait. No one here, not even he would think for a moment that she cared, at least she would be spared that humiliation. After all, when all this was forgotten, perhaps — and she drew for herself such an enchanting picture of what might be, that it



comforted and quieted her and she slept.

There was not wind enough to sail and Grace had followed her and at a safe distance watched her. She saw the industrious writing, the unhappy struggle and the final smiling victory. She let her sleep a little while and then came forward and looked at her. When Eleanor opened her eyes, Grace assuming the face and air of a street urchin sang: "And he winked the other eye, and he winked the other eye."

"Oh, Grace," said Eleanor, "don't. That is vulgar."

"Oh, forgive me, Gracious Lady!" she cried, and holding her hands over her head, she danced a most bewitching dance, singing, "The flowers that bloom in the spring," the words being her own, and appropriate. Eleanor could not help admiring the pretty, graceful girl and she let her finish before she spoke.

"So you all connived against me," she began.

"Oh, no," protested Grace. "No one knew but Mrs. Stone. I decided some days ago that there was no Mrs. Tyler, but I did



not speak of it. I had planned to have you read his history, it would have been rather more tragical than the way it was told." Then placing her hands on her heart and assuming a most love-sick expression, she exclaimed, "Oh, you dignified man-hater, you have it, and Jennie, the supremely indifferent, she has it! while I, who was to have been in love full twenty times at least, I haven't a symptom, not one!"

"Don't be too hasty in your conclusions," said Eleanor. "You might make a mistake."

"Oh," said Grace, drawing her face to its greatest length and imitating Mr. Graham's most sanctimonious tone, "don't deceive yourself, my dear young friend, and don't for a moment imagine that you have deceived anybody else." Then seeing Will on the walk she ran off singing, "Daisy, Daisy, give me your promise true."

So everybody knows everything, thought Eleanor. I could cry from pure vexation, and as she was about to realize this possibility, she heard steps behind her and looking up she met the tender, questioning eyes



of Professor Tyler. Her face must have answered satisfactorily, for he immediately sat down by her and, putting his arm about her said :

“My right there is none to dispute. You must be greatly vexed and annoyed, dear ; I have been thinking hard since dinner. I see a happy ending of it all. I went over to Boothbay with Spencer and I met an old-class-mate there ; his name is Bronson. He is a clergyman. The Kennebec touches Boothbay at four o'clock tomorrow morning on its excursion trip to Bar Harbor. Bronson has two staterooms, but his mother is not going, so he will need only one. Will you go to the south shore with me tonight at midnight, when everybody is asleep and the moon is up and let Bronson make you my wife ? We will ask Mrs. Stone and the girls, and George and Will. I have never thought the display and publicity of a large wedding fitting.”

“But my father and mother,” said Eleanor.

“They will not be back for a year you said. You will not ask me to wait a year.”



"I have accepted Mrs. Stone's invitation for the whole season and my Aunt who is keeping our house expects me then."

"I will make it right with Mrs. Stone, and together we will appease your Aunt. Bronson and I came over in a little steam yacht, we will go back and make the necessary arrangements. After our wedding we will go to Boothbay in this yacht and then take the Kennebec for Bar Harbor, or anywhere, it matters not, so we are together."

"But we know so little of each other."

"Here is my hand, read my story for yourself ; I can wait for yours."

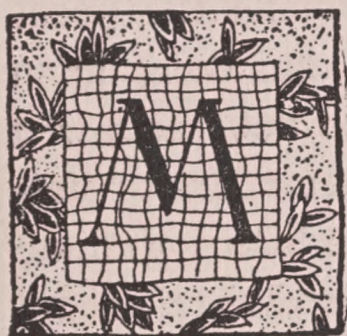
"It is not necessary, though I am glad you think I can."

"I have been converted, I suppose, in the last few hours, with 'child like trust,' I am willing to accept whatsoever is of good report, even though why it is, is not clear to me. But I must not wait. Shall we go to Boothbay ?"

"Yes," she answered.



# MRS. WEIR'S CASE.



RS. Weir was a district visitor for the F. C. T. O., which being interpreted, means Female Christian and Temperance Organization. She was one of those fortunate women who are never mistaken and whose worldly possessions are the best in the market. Whatever Mrs. Weir did by her own confession was promptly, thoroughly and satisfactorily done. And yet although she did boast and bustle, her heart was kind and she was a valued member of the F. C. T. O. Her cases were, of course, difficult and interesting.

On this particular morning Mrs. Weir had started out to visit the many bargain counters in response to alluring advertisements offering a great deal for nothing. She



reached the street car just as it came to the corner. Her emphatic gesticulations, which said as plainly as words, "Stop that car this moment or I will report you," caused such violent and unexpected manipulations on the part of the motorman that every strapholding passenger was precipitated upon his neighbor and a little boy was thrown headlong upon the floor. The inmates had not recovered their normal positions when Mrs. Weir entered the car. A man was lifting the boy into his lap, Mrs. Weir noticed that he did it tenderly and that the boy was pale and thin, and everything he wore, from the cap on his head to the shoes on his feet, was patched with many-colored pieces, a case for C. she thought, wondering if the man was his father, and a case for T.

When she looked at him closely he turned "toward her and noticing her standing, offered his seat. Mrs. Weir refused it, saying she could not hold the boy. She carefully studied the man's face. There were no marks of intemperance there, nor of great poverty. To be sure, his clothes were threadbare and he wore about his neck a



square of cotton cloth, either to protect his throat or to hide the lack of collar and shirt. His hair was as white as snow, but his face was comparatively young. There were deep lines showing great suffering, but just now the look of kind interest overshadowed these. It was altogether a pleasing and an interesting face, and as Mrs. Weir looked upon it her heart was filled with sympathy and a desire to help.

He bent over the boy and spoke to him, but so low she could not hear what he said ; although she heard distinctly the boy's answer :

"Oh, nowheres," he said, "I just ride on the cars 'cause they're warm. I'm too little to have to pay. I go with the kind conductors. One pushed me off, but this one always lets me go."

Mrs. Weir surprised the conductor by smiling kindly into his face, as he collected a fare near her, and the world took on a brighter look for him for the entire day.

Again the man spoke and the boy answered :

"No, Old Molly lets me stay with her.



She promised mother she would, and I pay her half of all I make ; Jake hasn't had any work for a long time and there are six kids." (Mrs. Weir determined to find Old Molly, thinking she was manifestly a case for C.)

"What does Molly do?" she heard the man ask.

"She washes," the child answered, "but most of the people do their own, now the times are so hard." \* \* \* "Eight."

\* \* \* "Oh, when I get some good clothes I am going to school and then to college, and after I get a good place I am to tell somebody. I have the name sewed in a little bag, and if I die they are to write to them." \* \*

"I run errands, and when my back doesn't hurt so I can't, I carry up coal, I sometimes earn twenty cents in one day."

A vacant seat allowed Mrs. Weir to sit by them, and then she heard what the man said :

"Would you like to live with me? I can teach you everything necessary for college, if we cannot get books. I can remember, and then this poor back can rest," and he stroked gently the boy's curved spine.



"That would be out of sight," the boy replied, "but have you room for me? Wouldn't I be a great bother? You talk like my mother. She said I musn't talk like the alley folks. They don't like it, but it's best to mind your mother when she's dead. It's terrible, I mean it's very hard not to say swear words. Most everybody does you know, and Jake explained to me that it very often keeps a man from hitting."

The man signaled the conductor, and Mrs. Weir followed him out of the car into a building of offices. She waited with an acquaintance till the man and boy came out. Upon inquiry, she found the gentleman, they had visited knew nothing about them.

"Some broken-down preacher, I reckon," he said. "I had advertised for someone to do some copying and he applied. I had hired a girl just a few moments before."

Mrs. Weir went away disappointed, but resolved to put the boy into the Children's Home and to thoroughly investigate them an.

Nothing, however, could cool her ardor, when kindled by prospective bargains. Her house was "furnished," "kept up" and car-



ried on " by successful visits to bargain counters. When Mr. Weir heard her tell some envious neighbor how all their finery cost next to nothing, he wondered where the money went and realized how greatly his value would be increased if his wife had picked him up on a bargain counter.

Nearly a fortnight passed before Mrs. Weir had succeeded in utilizing satisfactorily that morning's purchases. Then her thoughts turned to the gentlemanly man and the crippled boy. "The kind conductor" told her where the "old gentleman" usually took the car. When she reached the street she was surprise to find it so decent. The street was not paved and there were no sidewalks, but the houses were isolated and looked clean and comfortable. She stopped at the first house. The woman who responded to her knock and question said :

"Yes, I know him, but you can't touch him with a ten-foot pole."

"Why, isn't he poor?" Mrs. Weir asked, while visions of an eccentric or miserly rich man flitted through her mind.

"Yes, he's poor enough, and he's kind,



too ; he just took a poor hunchbacked boy to bring up, and his landlord would have brought him down a peg or two if the neighbors had insisted, and we would have insisted if it hadn't been for the kid. He's spent every cent he had fixing up warm and pretty for that boy. I guess he'll have a good time taking care of him, he can't get a blessed thing to do ; nobody'll have him around."

"Do you think he is a bad man ?" Mrs. Weir asked. "I am a district visitor of the F. C. T. O. It's my duty to find out, and you may tell me just exactly what you think."

"Huh," the woman grunted, "I haint nothing to tell, and I haint no use for them that goes prying about on poor folks with a dollar and a half for an excuse. If them letters wants to help poor people, why don't they do it and ask no questions and hear no lies ?"

"Oh," Mrs. Weir answered, "we are only allowed to help the worthy poor."

"Well," the woman said, "the Lord wasn't so mighty particular. I don't recollect him mentioning the worthy poor. If you want to find out about Mr. Spencer, just go



and ask him, and I wish you joy in the business."

Mrs. Weir shut the door, then remembering her failure to learn where the man lived, opened it. "Where does he live?" she asked.

"He lives," the woman answered, in sharp, pointed words, "in the cowshed behind 753."

Mrs. Weir walked rapidly away. She was annoyed, perhaps angry. She was accustomed to respectful gratitude on the part of her cases. To be sure this woman was not a case and there was some cause for her criticism. Mrs. Weir had always felt the "investigating" part of her district work disagreeable, but the woman might at least have been civil. By the time Mrs. Weir had reached 753 she felt out of patience with everybody in the neighborhood. She noticed the building was not a cowshed: it had a chimney and windows and a narrow door; it was likely a shop built for a cobbler or a tinker of some kind. She rapped impatiently. There was a moment's waiting and then the gentlemanly man opened the door.



"Will you walk in?" he said politely, and Mrs. Weir walked in. She was not prepared for what met her vision and she showed her surprise.

"Will you be seated?" he said, offering the only chair in the strange room. Its ceiling and walls were covered with odd pieces of cotton cloth in bright, harmonious colors. The floor was clean and the little stove was black. Corner closets and shelves were hidden by bright cotton curtains, often made of small, neatly sewed pieces.

The beds were broad shelves with the same pretty coverings. There was nothing visible in the room except the chair and stove, that was not the work of some pain-staking amateur, unless it was a photograph of two smiling young people leaning over a little shelf table where the crippled boy sat writing.

"Why, this is pretty!" Mrs. Weir remarked and then turning to the man who sat on a stool by the boy, continued: "I am a visitor of the F. C. T. O. and you are in my district, No. 27, I am here to make inquiries concerning this child and to arrange to take him to our children's home."



The boy looked up into the face of the man, a frightened, pleading look, who laid his hand gently upon his shoulder and turning to Mrs. Weir, said :

“Yes?”

“I don't know anything about you,” Mrs. Weir continued, “nor about this child, but if he is of honest parentage and poor there will be no trouble in getting him in.”

“Why,” the man asked, “do you wish to put him in the home?”

“That he may be taken care of in a Christian home, where he will be taught a trade and be made capable of supporting himself in some honest way.”

“Don't let her take me!” she heard the boy whisper to his companion.

The effect of the uncivil woman's rudeness still ruffled her and she said, a little sharply : “I am sure there is nothing in me to fear and the child, of course, does not know what is best for him. If you will give me his age and the names of his parents I will go now and make arrangements. Tomorrow I will come and relieve you of the care of a stranger.”



The man's face worked painfully. He laid his hand on the boy's head and stroked it gently. The little fellow cried softly, but said nothing.

"Here," the man said, handing her the picture of the happy young couple. "Here are his father and mother." After a moment's pause, he continued, "I appreciate your motives, and perhaps your plan would be best for him."

"I am sure it would," she interrupted.

"But," he continued, "if you have time to listen to a story I will tell you, you may feel that after all his place is here. About twenty-five years ago a young man graduated from college and went home to find his father sick and his mother worn out with care and anxiety. In a few weeks they died, and the young man was left with nothing save a blessed memory and a sure consciousness that privations endured for the sake of his education had hastened their death. He immediately went to work to pay all they owed. This he accomplished in a few years.

"During those years, he met, loved and



won a beautiful girl — beautiful in form, face and character. She was way above him socially, but she loved him. When the debts were paid, they were married, but without her parents' consent and with their expressed wish that they might never look upon her face again. He took her to a little house in an obscure street. They were happy there — unspeakably happy.

“On their wedding day, the young man resolved to place his wife as high, socially, as money could, for he knew then that she would no longer be denied the companionship of father, mother and sisters. This desire grew daily until it mastered all others. The young man was capable and industrious and he soon held places of responsibility and trust.

“In a few years he was made trustee without bond for the minor heirs of a large estate, and the will provided for the investment of a large amount of money.

“Then men, influential, prosperous men, whom he had long regarded with envious reverence, came to him, urging the investment of this money in a way unlawful, but one that promised sure, speedy and great



returns. 'He would be rich,' they said, 'before his next report was due, he could reinvest as the will ordered. No one would ever know; and, even if they should, his ability to double the interest would make it all right.' The schemes failed. The young man was arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced and taken to the penitentiary.

"His wife left the place where she had always lived and found work and a home among strangers. She wrote hopeful, encouraging letters and made him feel that life for her was comfortable and happy except for thoughts of him.

"In a few months a child was born to them. Then they decided that there should be no more visits to the prison, and after the child was old enough to question, no more letters. A new name was chosen for her. It should be theirs after awhile. When the day of release should come, they would meet in a certain place and life would begin anew.

"The man lived upon the picture of that meeting. It was his Bible, his play, his music, his everything that can comfort or delight.



“There were futile efforts for pardon, bringing hope and then despair.

“Finally the long years had gone. The man walked out into the blessed free air. He hurried to the place of meeting. When he came near his heart beat so fast he almost fainted. Once again he should look upon her face, he should feel her kiss upon his lips, for he knew, however he might appear to all the world, to her, who knew him best, he was not lost.

“He reached the spot, a little bridge just outside the town. There was no one there. I am too early, he thought; they were to meet at noon. Until night he sat upon the little bridge and waited. She did not come. Could she be sick? No, a messenger would be there then. Could she have forgotten? Had the years deadened her love and sent her back to them that hated him? or was she dead and all hope gone from him forever.

“It is needless to tell of that night's agony, of the days of searching and finding nothing, till finally upon the records of a potter's field, one line met his eyes. There



was the new unfamiliar name, — aged thirty-five, exposure and want. That was all.

“There was no other record. No clew could be found to make it certain that this was his Jeanette who lay in the potter's field or that their child still lived. The man spent all his days and nights upon the poorest streets of the city, stopping every lonely child he met, but he did not find his own. In all the world there was not one face to look upon him kindly, trustfully.

“He took the old name again; it was all of the happy past that was left to him now. He had a little money that he had earned in prison and received upon leaving. He resolved to buy a few feet in a cemetery, and lay his Jeanette there and then lie down by her side and die.

“He had not money enough, and he started out one morning in answer to an advertisement, hoping to earn more. On the way, in a crowded street car, a little crippled boy fell at his feet.

“This boy's mother had been dead for more than a year. His father had gone away before he was born so far and in such a



place he could not write to him. 'He was a brave, good, loving man,' so the mother had said, 'and some day he was coming back. Everything would be different then, and they would be, oh, so happy.' "

Some minutes before he had stopped speaking, he had bowed his head and covered his face with his hands. The little boy had risen and, standing by him, had put his arm caressingly and protectingly about his shoulders. He drew himself up as tall as he could and into the pinched sensitive face a look of determined defiance came. Turning to Mrs. Weir, he said :

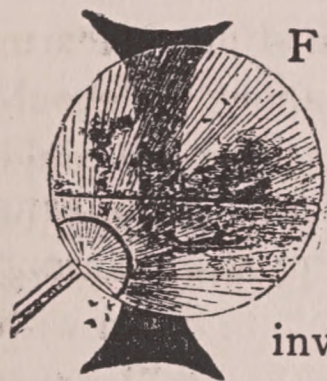
"You see, I can't go away. I shall take care of him till my father comes."

"I hope you will," said Mrs. Weir, rising, "and I hope you will learn to love him very much."

"I don't have to learn," the boy answered.



## THE FIRST MEETING OF A BROWNING CLUB.



F Mrs. Barnes had not visited in Cincinnati, there would likely never have been a Browning club in Thornville. She had accepted the invitation of an old school friend whom she had not seen for years ; she had made most careful and elaborate preparations for that visit. Her gowns were all made in New York, for her friend was rich and fashionable. She was also intelligent. People said she was the leader of a large and cultivated circle ; so Mrs. Barnes had studied early and late. She had made herself quite familiar with current topics in politics — free trade, the Philippine troubles, bi-metalism, etc. She had studied advanced



thought in religious matters till her own orthodox convictions trembled in the balance. She had studied theosophy, spiritualism, palmistry and all sorts of psychic wonders. She had even attended a course of lectures on Christian Science.

With what joyous anticipations, with what placid complacency, she made the journey to Cincinnati! With what disappointment, with what bitterness of soul she had made the journey home again! She was warmly welcomed by her friend; her gowns were becoming and stylish, but alas! on one occasion only had she been able to listen with interest and to respond with intelligence. She had been to one dinner party where there were men, and although they had done most of the talking, she had spoken and been appreciated. The rest of her invitations — and they were of daily occurrence — were to ladies' luncheons, high teas, and afternoon whist parties, and the one topic of conversation was Robert Browning.

There were ten ladies' clubs in Cincinnati, all studying Browning. Mrs. Barnes was profoundly ignorant of Browning's poetry.



She had read but one poem, "Evelyn Hope." She thought it a sweet little poem, simply expressing an old man's hope of meeting his girl sweetheart in heaven. When she ventured to mention it, she was immediately besieged with these questions, asked in the most appealing manner :

"Oh! do you think he taught theosophy in that poem, the transmigration of souls, you know; or do you consider him orthodox?" Mrs. Barnes did not know, and she was obliged to say so.

She had now been at home two weeks. She had planned and organized a Browning club, to meet every Wednesday, and had secured Miss Wyncoop, a teacher in a young ladies' seminary, as leader. There were thirty in the club: today they met for the first time.

The most conspicuous person in the room was Mrs. Brister, a handsome, fascinating woman, who was obsequiously polite to those in her own set when they were fixed there, and who snubbed unmercifully anybody outside of it. Mrs. Barnes was a leader in the set, hence Mrs. Brister was studying



Browning ; she had carefully read Corson and Mrs. Sunderland Orr, and although she had never read one of Browning's poems, she felt quite ready to give her opinion if Miss Wyncoop should ask for it.

Near her was Mrs. Haines, a doctor's wife ; she sat bolt upright in her chair with a determined look upon her face which said as plainly as words, " Ask me anything ; I am prepared." Almost hidden behind a portiere was Mrs. Calhoun, the wife of the richest man in town. She was a modest quiet little woman, who sang divinely. She was quite familiar with most of Browning's readable poetry, but she tried not to be seen, lest Miss Wyncoop should ask her something. Near her was Mrs. Snow, a minister's wife ; she was quite prepared to vindicate Browning's theology, as her husband, the reverend doctor, had assured her he was the one of all England's poets who stood up manfully and trumpet voiced for the truth as taught in the gospel, She meant to use those very words if called upon.

The wife of a professor mental philosophy, Mrs. Davis, was there. She had lately



copied for the tenth time, a treatise of the professor's on the "Immutability of the Reflective Powers." Many of the sentences she knew by heart, and was prepared to give them if Browning's ideas on mental philosophy were touched upon. Miss Snowdon, a pupil of Professor Davis', was there ; she had questioned the Professor closely as to his opinion of Browning, and was prepared to state that, although he was by no means orthodox in his religious teachings, his philosophy belonged to the old school and was unquestionably correct.

Mrs. Kimball, a banker's wife, was there. Mrs. Kimball was one of those happy individuals whose every possession, from a grandfather to table linen, is the best the world affords. Mr. Kimball she accepted with due allowance, not being a member of her family. She had graduated from the best girls' college in America ; her servants, her children, her piano and her sewing machine were the best known, and her notes on Browning, taken from her own library, were of course, the best, and she smilingly awaited an opportunity to quote them.



Mrs. Miller, a lawyer's wife, was there ; she was very like the rest of the thirty — quiet, modest, intelligent and well bred. She had no disagreeable idiosyncrasies and no resounding accomplishments, so people seldom spoke of her. Her ancestors and her table linen were real, but she never called attention to the fact, and few noted it. She never snubbed anyone, so her attentions to a select few were not chronicled. She was a faithful friend, a good wife and a devoted mother. No one talked about Mrs. Miller, but many went to her in trouble or anxiety, sure of sympathy and if possible, of help. Mrs. Miller had no one's theories of Browning to air. She had tried to read his poetry. In a few instances she was almost sure she knew what he meant, but being by no means certain, she had given up the chase. She was prepared to say she did not know, if questioned, and it did not distress her.

The ladies, armed with pencils and note books, wore various expressions of independence and fear, and all awaited quietly the teacher's coming. Promptly at three o'clock Miss Wyncoop came in.



She was a large, homely woman, about thirty-five years old. Honesty and self-complacency were unmistakably written upon her countenance. She had nothing to hide and no pity for anyone who had. She treasured no memories of stolen walks and talks in her school days. She could not even remember one admiring glance cast her way from the boy's side in prayer meeting, though during prayers she had often seen them looking in other directions and had been greatly shocked thereby. Indeed, she had experienced many shocks of that kind; but never of a personal nature. Miss Wyncoop always honestly expressed her opinion on any topic, at any time, and in any place and her remarks carried evidence of such preparation and conviction that all listeners accepted them as authoritative. She greatly admired Robert Browning's poetry. She liked it because it was hard to understand. She liked hard things. She never questioned the correctness of a decision when once she had made it. This characteristic made her especially adapted to lead a Browning club, as a less confident person might often be in doubt.



She came from an adjoining town and evidently was not prepared to see so stylish and intelligent an audience. At first she seemed abashed ; however she soon recovered, and requesting all to take careful notes, began her introduction :

“ All men are either poets or they are not. What is a poet ? ”

As she evidently paused for a reply, Mrs. Haines volunteered the information, that “ a poet is a man who writes poetry.”

“ Very true,” Miss Wyncoop replied, “ but please note this question. What is poetry ? ”

Each lady had an indistinct recollection of a definite answer to this question, learned in rhetoric when at school, but not one could recall it. They all wrote industriously, several rewriting the question a half dozen times. Finally, as no one replied, Miss Wyncoop very considerately left the answer till the next meeting, remarking that “ until they knew what poetry was, they could by no means decide whether Browning was a poet or not.” She then requested each lady to find a satisfactory definition of poetry and to judge a



poem which she would name, by this definition, so as to be able to decide whether it be poetry or not. She also requested them to note carefully all portrayals of sentiment or character, and decide if they were true to nature, thus being able to determine if they found the author to be a poet, whether he were true or not. She then read the poem selected for the next lesson, "The Statue and the Bust." Every lady in the room heard it for the first time, and every one was manifestly shocked. Mrs. Snow quietly folded her hands and said sotto voce :

"Such literature has been forbidden me from childhood. I hardly think I shall begin reading it now."

Mrs. Haines looked very stern, and calmly asked, "Do you consider this a fit poem for ladies to discuss?"

Miss Wyncoop expressed great surprise that anyone should question the morality of the poem, and dwelt at length upon the correctness and beauty of its teaching, ending with the sentence: "Doubtless not one of you, as you are happily married, can understand what it means, yet there can be no



doubt that any man or woman who does not love supremely, the one to whom he or she is wedded, especially if any other person is held in greater esteem, is in the sight of God and the angels, living in direct violation of the seventh commandment, and it would be infinitely better if the unloved wife or husband were abandoned for the loved one."

At this startling sentence there was a general uprising among the ladies, for what purpose no one could tell. Suddenly there was an unusual sound as of some one gasping, and then a fall, and all eyes were turned toward the portiere where Mrs. Calhoun was sitting. It was soon apparent that she had fainted, and all rushed to her, Mrs. Haines remarking: "It is the natural gas. The doctor has always said it was unhealthy — stifling."

Mrs. Davis exclaimed loudly and with evident satisfaction: "It is electricity. She sat right under an electric lamp, and I've no doubt the current went right through her! I have never allowed even a bell wire put up in my house, and I'm thankful for it!"

Mrs. Miller had noticed a look in Mrs.



Calhoun's face while Miss Wyncoop was speaking, and she knew it was neither natural gas nor electricity that had caused the faintness. She quietly put her arm about her and whispered : " I saw your carriage at the door, shall I go with you ? "

Her grateful assent caused Mrs. Miller to hurry the leave taking and they were soon outside in the fresh air and away from curious eyes.

" Will you drive with me ? " asked Mrs. Calhoun. " It is still early. I have a story to tell you — my story — and when I am done it may be you will not care to be with me again."

Mrs. Miller nodded assent, with a surprised benumbing sensation, for her friend's face told her it was no trivial tale she was to listen to.

In a quiet voice, with her hands tightly clasped and her eyes looking away too far for Mrs. Miller to follow them, Mrs. Calhoun began :

" My parents died when I was ten years old. I went to live with an uncle, a good sort of man, but not rich, and without the



education and refinement my father, his brother. had.

“I was sent to school, and at sixteen I graduated. Of course it was not much of a school, but it gave me the happiest of lives. The principal, Mrs. Marlow, had a brother, an army officer, who was frequently there, and who from our first meeting delighted me. I wish I could describe him to you. Of course he was older than I; he was strikingly handsome; he was very quiet and dignified, a good musician, an unusual poet, and withal a thoroughly good man. I can hardly remember when I did not love him, and I am sure he just as truly loved me. Before I graduated he was ordered away. He bade me goodbye with all the others, but he said to me alone: ‘I shall come back soon, and I shall see you first of all.’ That was all. There was no love making, no promise, — only the assurance of my own heart to make me patient and trusting.

“Well, I went home to my uncle’s; things were very bad there; if I had ever had any money it was all gone. My uncle’s family was very large, and there was no place



for me. I had been a good scholar ; and yet, I had been fitted in nothing specially, so I could not teach. I tried to sing, and though my voice is sweet and quite well trained, it is not large enough for a church. I even tried clerking, but I could not bear it. I fainted twice after two hour's stand behind the counter, and of course I was discharged.

“When I first came home my uncle introduced Mr. Calhoun to me, telling me beforehand that he was rich and very anxious to know me. I told him then there was no use in planning a wedding for me. Then he questioned me closely and learned some things about my hero, the principal's brother, whom he knew to be poor and who he decided for himself was but playing with a little girl. This he unhesitatingly told me, and as I had no word from the Major, and he did not come back, by constant ridicule and positive assertions, my uncle made me first fear and finally feel sure that what he had said must be true. I scorned the idea of his playing with me ; there had been no love making, but I felt convinced that what my heart had given had not been paid back.



“For three years Mr. Calhoun waited. I tried to do many things and failed, and at last on my nineteenth birthday we were married. I was frank enough to tell him about my soldier friend, and though it humiliated me more than I can tell you, I told him how I loved him. He looked at the matter very lightly. ‘Just a little girl’s fancy,’ he said, and put it out of his mind forever.

“You know Mr. Calhoun. You know he is a man fortunate in every way, and good, so people honor him, — he is, I can’t bear to say it, but I must to have you understand me, he is a good man and nothing more. He cares nothing for what is dearest to me. There is nothing in him for me but goodness, and even that is tiresome. And yet he loves me and he does not mistrust.

“Well, we were married ; we went on our wedding journey, and stopped in St. Louis. On the second day of our stay there Mr. Calhoun was obliged to be away at noon, and insisted upon sending my dinner to my room, thinking I would be timid about going to the dining room. But no, I thought I should enjoy it, as I should be alone several



hours. So he went. I dressed for dinner, and somehow there was ever present with me a feeling of exhilaration, as if something enchanting was about to come to me. I went out into the hall to go down, had gone only a little way when I felt two arms about me, and the dearest voice in the world to me, whispered : ‘ At last Gertrude, I have found you, my darling.’

“ It was my soldier, and just for a moment I forgot all in the great joy. Then it came to me. I drew myself away from him, and told him the whole story, — my waiting, my despair, my marriage. He said he had written to me in my uncl’e care when he found he could not come, but his lettets had not been answered, and he had about decided that, after all, he had been mistaken in what he had thought he had read in my eyes.

“ Well, we parted, — without words. He went his way ; I went mine. I went to my room ; I put on the gown that pleased my husband best ; and I met him with a smile, keeping still while he kissed me. I have done the same things every day for fifteen



years, but I have loved wholly and unreservedly my hero. I have shut my eyes and imagined it was he when my husband has caressed me. My husband thinks my nature cold, but he does not dream that I am false. I have sacrificed everything heavenly, and I have done it all for him, — my husband.

“ Tell me, am I in the sight of God and the angels an adulteress? I have never thought for one moment that my life was anything it should not be. I loved him. I must love him! I always know by the papers where he is and what he does, and I am sure his heart is mine alone. He has never married; and yet I never see him; I never have a word from him, but I love him and I always shall! My hope of heaven is not first that I shall see Christ there, but first of all that he will be there and we shall know each other. If I thought not, if I believed there was that other place of torment, if he were there, I should choose that. Has all this been wrong? Should I have forgotten my husband's years of waiting, his love, and left him? Should I have shocked my friends, society, the world, and led the way for others to walk in who are



fickle or unchaste? Was that the course for me? And is it all for naught, and worse? Am I — am I that vilest of all creatures?

While Mrs. Calhoun was yet speaking the carriage stopped. They were at Mrs. Miller's, and before she could answer the door was opened and she saw Mr. Calhoun's anxious face as he said tenderly: "They told me you were sick, Gertrude, and I came to meet you."

As Mrs. Miller left them, and he carefully wrapped the robes about his wife, she felt no sympathy for him, but her heart overflowed for the woman at his side who, kindly and without complaining, sacrificed herself for him.





## \*CLEONES.



CLEONES lived in Xanthus, the capital of Lycia, and he was sure there was, in the whole, wide world, no place half so charming. Wherever he looked, there was something to make him glad. On one side, high mountains, green with the tall oaks, the graceful cypress and the bright arbutus. On the other, the swift river, with its cool shaded banks, winding through broad, fertile fields, green with grass, bright with flowers, or rich with grain.

When he looked at the widely scattered houses and remembered that it had been a prosperous, populous city, he pitied its misfortunes and rejoiced in its bravery. He liked to hear the story of its greatness and

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\*A story of the Fifth Century giving some of the teachings of Proclus and some of "the wonders" he is said to have performed.



its grandeur and how it had so often made peoples envious and covetous. His young heart glowed with pride when he heard how, nearly a thousand years before he was born, it had been twice destroyed and twice rebuilt. He liked to hear how, finally, just because it was magnificent, the Romans had wanted it and only five hundred years before they had come and laid waste its finest and most imposing buildings. He felt a sort of martyr-like pride in its struggles, and its ruins were to him an unending source of pleasure.

Here had been a theatre, where the actors had played the plays written by Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. His father often read to him from these plays and they were so different from those the strolling actors played in their little theatres now. He could not always understand what his father read, but he liked the sound of his voice and the stories of great battles he told in explanation.

Here had been a temple. He talked low and stepped softly over these ruins, for great and wonderful things had been wrought in the temples. Here had been the tombs.



Tombs of poets, priests and philosophers, long avenues of wonderful marbles, now piles of broken stone. He felt angry and like fighting, whenever he passed them. Here the baths, the great bazaar and oh, so many handsome homes. But most wonderful of all was the high hill, which fell abruptly into the river, Xanthus', Acropolis.

This hill's sides were perforated with rock-hewn tombs. Some, the most ancient, without ornamentation, others, wonderfully chiseled, showing pictures of noble deeds of the heroes whose ashes were there preserved. These tombs told the story of conquest over and over again. The brave Lychians were always few in number, dauntless in courage, suffering death rather than submission.

Cleones often wandered alone over these ruins, climbing the wall, picturing the temples and the treasure vaults and living over again the story of the one great sacrifice; when the men of Xanthus, knowing that they must submit, gathered all their treasures, wives, sweethearts, everything they prized most and shutting them inside these



walls, burned them to ashes, and then went out themselves to die, fighting. Cleones pictured the scenes of parting and of suffering, and he felt only pride in his countrymen that they could do so brave a deed, for he had been taught that submission and slavery were worse than death.

Cleones was sure that his own luxurious home was the happiest in the world, that his mother was the most beautiful of women and his father the wisest of men. He never tired of the story of their marriage, it was so unlike all others that he knew. His nurse, who had also been his mother's, could always entertain him by telling it.

"Come, Cleones," she would say, "sit down by me and rest and I will tell you the story over again. It was only fifteen years ago, your mother was just sixteen years old. Her pretty yellow hair had just reached her waist. No other girl among all her friends had such beautiful hair. Some of them sent away and bought an ointment and put it on their heads and then sat long hours in the sun. Their hair grew light, but not like your mother's and in a few weeks, it was faded at



the ends and half way up and black on top.

“One day your mother went to the river to bathe. She took me and four other slaves with her. We went to the same shaded place where you have been so often. The trees, you know, make a safe and secret place to dress in. After the bath, your mother was sitting in the sunshine, waiting for her hair to dry. One of the girls was twisting it round her finger and admiring the pretty color. Your mother’s dress was blue. Her white neck and arms were as perfect as if chiseled by some great artist. I stood looking and wondering at her beauty, and I was the first to hear the footsteps. Before we could move, your father, with one slave, old Manes, came out of the trees and, although he did not intend to be rude, he stopped and stood still and looked at your mother and I knew then that something had happened. It was if each had gazed on the face of some god that had filled their souls with adoration.

“Your father had been away at school for years but I knew his nurse, and I could tell who he was and I soon learned that he was asking about your mother. Every week,



for months after that, your mother went to the same spot to bathe ; and every week your father came and just for a moment, they looked at each other. Your mother's father was a great philosopher, who spent all his time in study, so your father immediately took great interest in philosophy and came to your grandfather for advice. Although your grandfather spent much time with your mother, for he had no sons, yet no Greek girl would meet a strange man at her father's house, unless he came as her promised husband, and so they only saw each other at the riverside and spoke only with their eyes. When your father knew the philosopher valued him greatly, he sought his advice about a wife, as none had been provided for him. Your grandfather proposed several girls, but something was wrong with each of them. Finally your father said, 'Have you no kinswoman that could be given to me?' 'Yes,' he answered, 'I have a daughter, but her dowry is not large.' 'That matters not,' said Liones, 'my father is dead and he had great possessions and I am his only child.' Then her father called Nantelia in and the



young people acted as if they looked upon each other for the first time. And as long as your grandfather lived, he thought he had given Liones an unknown bride."

"Tell me about the wedding, Penlia," Cleones would say.

"It came in three weeks," Penlia answered. "Nantelia's chests were already filled and her gown made, for no one knew when a husband might come. There was a solemn betrothal in the temple, a private one, as the public temples had long since been closed or destroyed. The gods were crowned with garlands, costly incense was burned all day and two doves were sacrificed. Your father drank the wine and your mother stood near, closely veiled and bowed assent when the priest repeated the promises. We slaves were very busy re-packing the wedding chests, putting in sweet smelling leaves and renewing the citron and orange. At your father's home, men and women were hard at work, night and day, cleaning and renovating. They furnished entirely anew the women's apartments, for they had been long unused.



“On the wedding day, we took your mother to the beautiful, never failing spring in the mountains to bathe. Boys carried to your father for his bath, vessels filled with water from the same spring. We used the choicest perfumes. Her mother put the wedding gown upon the bride. It was pure white silk. She fastened long pearl drops in her ears. She put upon her neck a beautiful gold necklace, upon her arms gold armlets, and through her hair, bandeaux of the same precious metal. She fastened her veil with a gold tiring-pin that she had worn at her own bridal. She wound the white thongs around her sandals, which she herself had beautifully embroidered.

“Your father came for her in a handsome carriage, drawn by stately mules. His dress was of soft white wool, with a long white scarf over his shoulders. Your grandmother gave him his bride and he seated her in the carriage between him and his friend Proclus. Then your grandmother lighted the wedding torch and carried it close by the god Hymen at the head of a procession of relatives and friends, and the



slaves of both families, that walked slowly to this house, your father's. There were so many flute girls that the music could be heard miles, miles away. When we entered the house, we were showered with sweetmeats and coins. Then there was a great banquet, and all the slaves that served were given handsome presents, almost as beautiful as the bride's. These were not given to her until the day after the wedding. A chorus of maidens sang the merry songs of Hymenaeos during the feast and until the bridal cakes were all eaten and the guests were gone. And to this day, your father has always loved your mother just so dearly and she is always with him, unless he is busy or stranger's are here."

"Penlia," Cleones would often say, "I shall not go to Athens to study at Proclus' school. I shall walk every day at the river side and watch for a beautiful maiden to love and make my wife."

"Pooh, pooh, Cleones," Penlia would answer, "only wise men should have wives. You must study first and visit the river after."



## CHAPTER II.

Cleone's parents were proud to trace their families back to homes in Athens before the time of Pericles. They religiously preserved the ancient customs, and their wedding had been, as nearly as they could make it, after the manner of Greek weddings of hundreds of years before.

Their home was built like the houses of the same remote age, and, indeed, no one knew how old it was. There was before the street door, a pedestral for the god Apollo and just now the image of the god was there : but there had been times in the memory of the oldest people when it had not been allowed and there were no pedestals before the modern houses. There was an inscription over the doorway whose few remaining letters had no meaning to the present owners.

The home was built of huge blocks of stone and, unlike most of the houses about it, there was but one story. Its length was



twice its breadth and it was divided in the center by two massive walls, separated by a narrow open space. Each half surrounded a court and every room in the square opened upon porches with large stone columns. In the front square were the men's apartments. Offices, sitting, dining and sleeping rooms. A narrow hallway opposite the street door led to the square containing the women's rooms, built exactly like the other, only there was no street door. Here were sitting, dining, weaving and sleeping rooms, with kitchens and store houses. In the little gardens or courts within the squares were the cultivated fruits and flowers, oranges, lemons, figs and pomegranates. The porches' columns were wound with living myrtle vines, and beds of sweet violets everywhere perfumed the air. The rooms were furnished with beautiful Persian carpets and hangings and the walls were painted in harmonious colors. The couches, settles and stools were covered with the same bright rugs and supplied with the softest cushions. In Cleones' home, the women's apartments were as handsome as the men's, and his



mother spent much of her time in his father's rooms.

Cleones was a handsome, thoughtful boy, serious beyond his years, probably because he was much with his father and mother and they were students. Although their friends were only among those whom they were pleased to call true Greeks, the believers in the teachings of the philosophers and in the powers of the gods, yet Cleones' playmates were of his own choosing, and the mother of the one he liked best was a Christian, converted by the teachings of a pious Pelagian monk, who, after his excommunication, had come to Lycia.

Cleones' parents had taught him grammar, arithmetic and rhetoric, and he could write very well in prose and verse in his own tongue and in Latin. As all birthdays, including those of grandparents for several generations, were celebrated, hardly a week passed without a birthday fete. Cleones' came on the same day with a great-great-great grandfather, whose name he bore. And so, on that day, two garlands were put upon the image of Apollo, two wreaths upon



the altar in the little temple. Two goblets crowned with myrtle stood upon the table and the guests drank from them, first to the memory of the dead and then to the prosperity of the living. These were very solemn days to Cleones.

Sports came after the feast, but the story of this grandsire's bravery and wisdom, though so often repeated, always impressed him greatly and filled him with hopes and ambition to be like him, wise and just and brave. On his last birthday, when he was only twelve years old, he had written some verses about this grandsire, and his father had recited them at the feast and they had been greatly praised.

Cleones liked to study and he liked the gymnasium, especially the palaestra, where wrestling was taught. One day he had been practicing with some of the boys, running, shooting with the bow and throwing the javelin. But most of the time had been spent in the palaestra, where he had thrown every boy with whom he had wrestled. Of course this had made them envious and cross and the bath and rest had not cured them.



When they came away, their talk grew loud and disagreeable. Cleones left them and ran to his home. His slave tried to keep pace with him, but he was far behind when Cleones pounded on the door. "Hurry, Manes, open for me," he cried. The old porter turned the key. "Why are you so noisy", he said, "I answer just as quickly to quiet calls." Cleones hurried by. He ran around the first court and through the narrow hallway to his mother's rooms. He pushed aside the heavy rug that hung in the doorway. His mother was lying on a couch and a slave girl stood near, fanning her, while another held her embroidery.

"Oh, mother," he cried, "I shall never speak to Ctesiphon again.

"Why what is the matter, dear," his mother asked, "and aren't you making rash promises?"

"Matter enough," said Cleones, "and you will think so too."

"Tell me about it," she said.

"I beat him at everything this morning, even the wrestling, and it made him angry and when we started home, he said he didn't



care, he had no use for pagans any way, and if I should die to-day, my soul would be thrown into a burning lake and stay there forever, always burning and never burned up. He said he wouldn't care, either. When I told him it was not so, he said wise men had taught it and wiser than my father and that he believed it, so he wouldn't burn, but go straight to Paradise. Mother, why do we not believe as Ctesiphon's mother does, and are you not afraid of the burning lake?"

"No, Cleones, your grandfathers believed, your father and I believe as Plotinus taught, as his followers have always taught, and as Proclus is now teaching in Athens."

"What do they teach, mother?"

"I am afraid you would not understand."

"Ctesiphon's mother told me long ago about her god, and I understood. She said, long years ago, Ctesiphon's baby brother lay dead in her arms. She said her heart was very sore and she was angry with the gods. She thought, for some sin of hers or his father's, they had taken the baby soul to send it into some beast or bird or flower. When she was almost crazed with grief, a



holy man came to her and told her about his god, a great father that loved her. He said this great father had sent beautiful angels and very gently and tenderly they had taken her baby's soul straight to Paradise, where mother angels cared for it and kept it safe from pain or sin or sorrow, waiting for her until she should come to claim it. And when she found it hard to believe, he said his god would help her, if she asked him, and she did and she said a sweet peace came to her and she knows it is true, for she has felt it. Tell me, mother. I can understand, and I want to know what to say to Ctesiphon."

"I will tell you, Cleones, and you must listen very carefully. First of all, more than two hundred years ago, Ammonius Saccas lived in Alexandria, an ignorant, common laborer, but just and pure and thoughtful. To him the gods revealed many things, long misunderstood, and, although he could not write, he told these things to other good and thoughtful men, and they believed and remembered his teachings. His greatest pupil was Plotinus. He went to Rome and the emperor Gallienus and his wife, Salolina,



loved him and honored him and believed his teachings. His life was one of constant self-denial and he so purified his body that the great soul of the universe could, without taint by contact, come to his soul and reveal many hidden mysteries. This was often done. Porphyry was his follower and Iamblichus, Sopater, Plutarchus and Syrianus and, last of all, our own Proclus. All of these men lived chaste lives, full of study, self-denial and generous deeds. They were persecuted by Constantine and Constantius because they did not believe in Christianity, and Constantine beheaded Sopater, saying he had bound the winds by magic, but the emperor Julian believed implicitly the teachings of Iamblichus."

"But, mother, what did they teach?"

"They taught first, how the world was made and peopled. Look at the sun, Cleones, see how its rays come from it without its choice or effort. So all things come from the first great cause, whom men call god. First from him came thoughts, very like him, because so near. These thoughts were not merely ideas, but really existing



objects. From these came the great soul of the universe, some call it destiny. From this soul came our souls. Down through the changes of countless ages our bodies and all terrestrial things grew. This first great cause cannot think nor act upon anything, for He is all, and has no need of aught. Around him all things revolve, not because he is a center point, but because dependent upon him. Of his nature, we know nothing. He first shines in Heaven, the highest and noblest place for the purest soul. And then in the stars. the first visible gods, who influence greatly all that pertains to mortals. In the space between the stars and the earth, the demons or spirits dwell. Through these our souls pass as they come to human bodies and are made beautiful or deformed thereby. Then they choose the body best suited to their impulses. Our souls shall go back to this god when perfected here. The nearer we live to pure, chaste, self denying lives, the sooner we shall be ready for the final union. Now, that is enough for to-day. Tomorrow, I will tell you about Proclus. Go get your Hero's engine and fountain and let me



see you work them and when you are tired, we will play at checkers, jackstones, and dice, and my Cleones will forget the quarrel and remember only the love he bears his friend."





## CHAPTER III.

The night after his quarrel with his friend and talk with his mother was a troubled one to Cleones. He dreamed that gods and demons were standing all about him, watching the spirit of his mother just passing into the burning lake, and not one of all of them could help, nor of the spirits of his ancestors, though they wept and wrung their hands. When he called out to them loudly, he awoke, and Penlia was obliged to call his mother, before he would be satisfied and sleep. The next day, as soon as lessons and gymnastics were over, he and his mother went into the court-garden for another talk.

“I want to stay close by you to-day, mother,” he said, “let the girls get a large parasol that will cover us both and then I can sit near and hold your hand.”

The mother was not strong. For months she had been ailing, so they brought large, soft cushions for her to lean upon. Cleones



sat by her side and behind them a pretty slave girl stood to hold the parasol. Their gowns were alike, azure blue, loose, fastened at the shoulders and reaching to the ankles. There were yellow bands around the top and bottom of Cleones' and the shoulder fastening and the girdle were yellow cords and tassels. His mother's was without trimming. Jewelled clasps fastened the shoulders, the girdle was of flexible gold. The bright coloring of the palms, the myrtles, grape and gourd vines, the flowers of every hue, the moss covered walls of the house, the wonderful blue of the sky, the perfect forms of mother, son and slaves made the scene one of indescribable beauty.

"Now, mother, tell me all about Proclus and why he does not believe in the Christians' god."

"Very well, dear, and I will begin with his birth. His mother was not well, and months before he was born, his father took her to Constantinople to be near skilled physicians. Proclus was born there. It is too bad it could not have been here in Xanthus, his home. And yet, perhaps it was better



so, for the place where his mother stayed was near a temple, and at midnight, just as Proclus opened his eyes for the first time, a procession of priests going to the temple, passed the house. They carried bay boughs and garland-trimmed baskets with the sacrifice, and chanted, in low voices, hymns to Apollo. The figures of the stars at his birth were the best possible to make a good and wise man. His mother's health improved so rapidly that, when he was a few months old, they brought him home and though tempests raged and many ships were lost, no harm came to theirs, the roughest winds only sent it swifter on its way. When Proclus was only four years old, Apollo and Athene came to him. They gave to him their greatest gifts, manly beauty, courage, the spirit of poetry and of prophecy and his mother knew, when he described their looks and their actions, that something great and glorious awaited her boy. When he was thirteen he went to Alexandria to learn grammar from Orion and rhetoric and law from Leonas. Afterwards he studied mathematics and philosophy and then he went to Athens: his



teachers there were Plutarchus and Syrianus. They initiated him into the mysteries of Eleusis, and Plutarchus' wonderful daughter of whom all the world has heard, the beautiful Asclepigenia, consecrated him with her own hands.

"He soon became the most wonderful of adepts. He did so many marvelous things that, although Syrianus had died and he had been given his chair in the academy, the emperor was suspicious of him and sent him away. He came home and I, myself, have seen him do most wonderful things, beyond explanation and showing that he has, in some degree, the power of the gods. I have been present with others, when he has called to earth and made to pass before us, one by one, in visible forms, the demons or spirits, who, I have told you, occupy the space between our world and the stars, and who often come near us, influencing us to evil or to good.

"We could see them stalk about and could easily tell the evil and the good.'"

"Oh mother, were you not afraid?"

"No, Cleones, there is nothing to fear



except the influence of the bad spirits, such as controlled you yesterday, when you hated your friend. If Proclus had been here then and had shown you the wicked spirit close by you, I am sure you would never, never again listen when it whispered, it is so hideous. I have seen just such, and I have seen love, too, and it made me resolve to listen and obey whenever it spoke to me, that I might have something so beautiful always near. Proclus is back in Athens now, and unmolested. He accepts every religion in the world, except the one that denies all others. He teaches plainly that the immortal in us shall go back to the immortal from whence it came. He shows plainly that the one great first god can have no thought of you and me. Only by subduing all earthly desires can we make it possible for our souls to turn towards him, and when they do, then there is harmony, not discord. Then there is sympathy, a relation between them, and we like to be just and pure and noble. Our bodies are our misfortunes, and we must make them the cleanest, purest possible, then they will not so greatly vex our souls, and the hideous



spirits, discouraged, will go away from us. But what these bodies do and what they feel can only keep us longer away. They cannot prevent the final union with the first great soul from whence ours came."

"But, mother, Ctesiphon's mother says her god is a father and he gave his son to die for us and we must believe in him."

"But, Cleones, do you not see that, if he is our father and loves us, he will not do less for our souls than the great god Proclus honors, who only is, and does not care?"

"In a few years you shall go to Athens and study with Proclus and perhaps you may be worthy to be initiated into The Mysteries and learn what only the initiated know."

"What are The Mysteries, mother?"

"I do not know. No one has ever been false to his vow of secrecy. For nearly eighteen hundred years they have been celebrated and with great pomp and ceremony, but now, for many years, the ceremonies are secret."

"Why are they secret?"

"Because the new rulers thought the rites were wicked. How could they be when



the state authorized them and paid the expense? They forgot that when the great temple at Eleusis was destroyed, the wise Pericles rebuilt it. Some day, you and I will go together along the Sacred Way, from Athens to Eleusis. We shall see along the stone pavement the prints of the cars, wherein the mothers of poets, philosophers and statesmen sat. And not only the mothers, but the men, the greatest the world has ever known. Once every year, along this Sacred Way, passed the wise men of Athens, the satraps of Asia, the monarchs of Egypt and of Rome, and side by side with them, brave mothers, modest maidens, tired workmen and ignorant slaves, all intent upon the one great object, to be wiser and purer and sooner fitted for heaven. Proclus says: 'These Mysteries draw men away from selfish lives and fit them for communion with the gods.' The whole way is lined with ruins now, even the magnificent temple on the mountain summit, where the way ends, is demolished. But pilgrims still go up to the pile of broken stones, to adore the outraged gods. If my Cleones would be fit to know



The Mysteries, he must learn first of all to bridle his temper and he must forget this Cleones and think only of the hidden soul that shall live forever. Proclus lives only for his soul. Sometimes he even forgets to eat. The gods are always near him. His beautiful soul is so perfect that they hardly condescend when they speak to him. You may be like him, if you will, learned and chaste, fit to live and fit to die. Then you need have no fear of punishment.

“But I am tired now. I must go and rest. Get your blocks and build a temple, and have it ready when I come.”

When she arose to go, she grew very pale and sank trembling back upon the pillows. The slaves hurried to her, and lifting her, carried her to her room, When Cleones would follow, they motioned him away.



## CHAPTER IV.

It was a busy time with Cleones' father. Men were coming and going and buying and selling for many of his ships had come in, and were being emptied and reladen for another journey. Ordinarily Cleones would not dare to interrupt his father; he did not hesitate now, but hurried to his room. Two strangers stood near. Without heeding them, trembling and sobbing he clung to his father's dress. "Oh father," he cried, "will my mother die and shall I see her on the funeral pyre and have to throw the oil cruet, or will they put her in the cold dark ground, my precious beautiful mother, and oh, father, I am afraid of the burning lake." Startled and frightened, the usually silent, self-controlled, undemonstrative man, caught the boy in his arms and tremblingly listened to his story of his mother's white face and how she staggered and almost fell. "Go quick, father," he said, "I will watch the coins." Dismissing the men, his father left him.



There were always, night and day, two slaves in this room, for the treasure vault was under it. A block of stone could be lifted from the floor. It revealed a room lined with shelves, upon which lay precious stones, blocks of gold and silver and rows of coins. Cleones had seen specimens of most of the coins. Many of them were over a thousand years old. Upon the most ancient, as well as upon those of more recent date, were different forms of the trefoil.

There were also pictures of lion's heads, of fishes, of birds, of horses, as well as of many purely imaginary animals. There were some heads of women, many of men and scores of Athene in different styles. By the coins, Cleones had been taught to trace the history of Lycia. He had found many with figures and inscriptions like those on the tombs in the ruins. On the table were piles of coins : usually these would have been full of interest to Cleones. He liked to separate them and fix their periods and look for new ones : but to-day he did not notice them. He tried to keep back the tears, saying to himself, " A philosopher would not weep, he



would hope and wait, and mother wants a philosopher."

When his father came back, he said, "She was very tired, a glass of wine and a dark cool room revived her. We must be very careful of her, Cleones, she is not well."

"Take her to Constantinople, father, to the great physicians, where Proclus' mother was cured."

"I have thought of it, Cleones, but our own good physician says it would only tire her, they could not help."

"Then send to Proclus, he is very near the gods."

"I have, Cleones, I sent a messenger to Athens on my last ship and returning, he said, 'Proclus bids me say, 'I have no power to heal the sick or raise the dead, and I would not, if I could, for I consider the greatest good possible is separation from this tempting, suffering, worthless body.'"

"Then, father, try all the gods and buy the costliest sacrifices."

"I have, Cleones, I have spared nothing."

His hopeless, resigned look and tone



brought despair to the young boy's heart, and then came to him, for the first time, torturing doubts of the greatness and power of his father's gods and with it a longing for some communion with the greatest god, who perhaps, after all, might care. Ctesiphon's mother had told him only of the teachings of the heretic monk regarding her baby's soul and Ctesiphon had taunted him with the burning lake. He knew nothing of any church doctrine, baptism or any of the sacraments. He only knew that Ctesiphon's mother, in her greatest need had found peace and comfort from the Christian's god.

When he had finished speaking, his father had turned to the coins and begun counting and sorting them. Cleones went to his mother's room. The slave girl watching at the doorway told him that she slept and must not be disturbed. He turned to his own room, where his games were, but nothing interested him. Calling a slave to follow, he went out to the hill where the ruins were. Here he had found a chamber made by the falling walls. He had hidden the entrance with a pile of stones, and no



The stones, in falling, had left several window-like openings. In this room he had worked for weeks. On the ceiling and walls he had spread a paste of mud, and in it had fastened all sorts of pretty things, bright pebbles, odd shaped stones, shells, bits of moss and wood, till the little chamber might easily have deceived a relic-hunter, and led him to think he had found some robber's cave, made beautiful for the one loved best. Here Cleones had planned to bring his mother when it was finished and perhaps (and this dream came always after listening to his parents' love story) perhaps he would discover it first to some beautiful maiden who would be his bride.

Cleones was not a favorite with the boys. His scholarly way of talking and his precise manners did not invite familiarity. His father's wisdom and riches, the things that made the boys envious, made them also think him proud. But, although Cleones did rejoice in his father's wisdom and his mother's beauty, he was not proud. He would have been glad to be familiar and intimate with the boys if he had known how :



one, not even his mother, knew of the place. because he could not, he suffered many hours of loneliness and disappointment. Ctesiphon liked him, but his Christian mother knew Cleones' parents would not like to have him often with her; and so, in this secret place, Cleones worked to forget his isolation and loneliness. He made friends with birds and bugs, and sometimes even wild animals visited him and took food from him. To-day, he left the slave, a few rods away, and went alone to his "cave." In the corner he had piled twigs from sweet-smelling shrubs, these he kept covered with fresh leaves, He sat down upon this couch and thought over the terrible possibilities of the future. What life would be to him without his mother. What it would mean if, after all, Ctesiphon spoke the truth. He went over and over the teachings of Proclus and tried to find comfort and help, but again and again there came to him the picture of Ctesiphon's mother's face when she said, "I know it is true." And again, and again, with greater vividness, the awful picture of his own desolation. Overcome, he lay upon the couch of



leaves and wept. A dove lighted upon the little window and looking in for its usual meal, saw the boy weeping. It hopped in and rested on his shoulder and made a soft cooing noise, as if comforting its own little ones. The beetles and others of his friends among the bugs came out and crawled softly and familiarly about. A little jackal stuck its nose through a crevice in the stones and made no motion toward the door but stood and looked upon the sufferer. Some boys, climbing over the hiding place, by the noise of falling stones, aroused Cleones. He would have been glad to have called them in and even to have given up the treasured room for the sake of their sympathy, but he feared their ridicule. He put out his hand to the dove and it lighted upon it.

“Oh, Birdie,” he said, “do you know my mother is sick and no one, not even the gods, can help? Proclus says the greatest one does not care but the holy man told Ctesiphon’s mother that he did and now I want him to care for my mother, but I cannot ask him unless she says I may. I have done so many naughty things. I have been



cross and angry and made my mother sad. Oh, I wish I had not. I cannot now do anything she would not like. Oh dove, pretty white dove, do you think it is true? Does the great god care? Has your soul wings too, and would you mind very much (and he laid his wet cheek caressingly on the bird) would you mind if I gave you, my prettiest pet, to the priest for the sacrifice? And then would you send your white spirit straight through the demons, the stars, the living thoughts, right up to the purest heaven, where the greatest god is and tell him we would like to trust him, if he cares?"

The slave called his name loudly, and he started up and the dove fluttered and flew away. Placing the stones back over the entrance, he went out to go home, for it was long past his usual meal time,

Gradually his mother grew weaker and weaker. There were days when she could sit up and talk to Cleones and these filled his heart with hope, soon to be banished, for days followed when the physician was anxious and fearful, the slaves whispered and cowered in the corners and his father went about silent



and despairing. Every one seemed to forget to comfort the heavy, breaking heart of the boy. His mother alone understood him. She knew how unusually thoughtful and care-bearing he was ; but to his father, he was only a little boy. He brought him sweetmeats and games and spoke cheerfully when there were comfortable, hopeful days, and aid nothing when they were discouraging. He thought Cleones did not realize the danger and he meant to keep it from him as long as possible. Cleones was not deceived, but he could not speak his fears, so he was left alone with his sorrow. Day by day he thought over the teachings of Proclus and tried to be comforted by them ; but there came to him constantly the picture of the burning lake with Ctesiphon's mother's story of the beautiful carrier angels and the sweet peace. Night after night he crept to his mother's room, and listened, hoping to find her alone and to ask the one great thing of her which he was sure she would not refuse, but there was always some one there to bid him be silent. The desire grew and grew and the need seemed so great that courage



came with it. Several months had passed since their talk in the garden. For more than a week, his mother had lain quiet, scarcely speaking. For one day, she had not noticed him when he came to her. All night he had lain awake, listening, trembling at every noise, lest Penlia should come to tell him that all was over and his mother gone forever. At last, as the day dawned, he could bear the suspense no longer and he got up and hastened to her bedside. He paid no heed to the earnest gesticulations of the slaves, and when his father motioned him away, although he grew pale and trembling, yet he did not stop. His mother opened her eyes when he came near and held her hand out to him. "My precious boy," she whispered. "Mother," he said, "will you not take the Christian's god too, and may I ask the great father god who cares to send his angels to carry you safe away from the burning lake? If it is a mistake, our gods will not mind, and oh mother, I must ask some one greater than all the rest to listen to me, some one who cares, and I cannot unless you are willing."



“ Yes, dear,” she whispered, “ yes, you may pray to Ctesiphon’s mother’s god.”

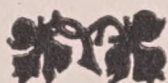
Cleones knelt by her bedside and clasped his hands and lifted his face and, with one accord his father the proud philosopher, and the great physician and the trembling slaves knelt and clasped their hands and lifted their faces and the child prayed. When he had finished and arisen, his face wore the same shining look that the great masters put into their pictures of the Christ. He kissed his mother and went back to his room to sleep, for he knew, as Ctesiphon’s mother knew, when her baby lay dead in her arms, that some great and loving one had heard and had sent peace.

His mother grew better, but only for a few weeks, but the same peaceful assurance stayed in the boy’s heart, and, without their knowledge, comforted and sustained the whole household.

When they buried her, Cleones laid a cross upon her breast and though he still believed that Demeter, Appollo, Athene and Aphrodite brought the fruits and grain, and gave courage, genius and death, still, above



them all he placed the father god and  
to him he cried when his need was great.



THE END.







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